



THE ART OF BEING

- | - AN ORDINARY SUPERHERO

"Mom! Have you seen my pearl bracelet?"
Nirmi cried from her room.

"It's there inside your cupboard" Her mother
shouted from the kitchen. "It isn't there, I already
checked my cupboard". Nirmi replied.

It was 7am and Nirmi's usual search for her
belongings had begun. Shalini, Nirmi's mother, sighed
and went up to her room.

"See for yourself, it isn't here. I think I lost
it" Nirmi began once she saw her mom. Shalini
~~went~~ opened Nirmi's cupboard and after scanning
everything inside, she pulled up a shiny chain of
white pearls from underneath all the books and
handed it to Nirmi.

"You found it!" Nirmi exclaimed "Thank you
so much" she ~~act~~ said with a sheepish grin. Her
mother only smiled and went back to the kitchen

(Note: Graded Items may be published in **Schoolwki**. So write neatly. Don't fold paper. Don't write overleaf)



Item Code:

695

Participant Code:

102

Shalini was ~~busy~~ busy preparing ~~the~~ lunch boxes for her husband and children. Her eyes looked tired and there were dark circles under it. Her skin had ^{few} wrinkles and her appearance was of ~~as~~ a middle aged woman who hadn't had proper sleep.

She had an unexpected call from her in laws announcing their visit and she had worked without rest the entire day before only for them to cancel in the morning. She hadn't slept enough and was eager for her husband and children to leave so she can finally get some rest.

"Here's your tiffin" Shalini handed the lunch boxes to her husband and kids. "Did you take all your books?" she asked looking at her younger son Arjun.

"Yes!" The child nodded

"What about your bottle and umbrella?"

"Not them in my bag right here" ~~The~~ Arjun turned around to show his mother the bag on his

(Note: Graded Items may be published in **Schoolwki**. So write neatly. Don't fold paper. Don't write overleaf)



Item Code: 695

Participant Code: 102

back. "Good. See you in the evening. Bye!"
She hugged her daughter and son and smiled when she saw Nirmal trying to break out of it.

"Bye mumma!" "See you mom" The kids yelled as they ran towards their father's car.

Shalini groaned when she ~~stood~~ stood up. ~~again~~
Her back was killing her. She hadn't gotten around to taking some ~~of~~ time off for herself since she ~~was~~ had a ton of chores to do. There was laundry to do and dishes to wash and a ~~ton~~ lot of other chores. She was still expecting her in laws to turn up unexpectedly and made sure there was enough food ~~is~~ for everyone and that the fridge wasn't empty.

She went out to buy some groceries. As she was waiting in line at the grocery store she saw a group of ladies talking to some guys. ^{Their} ~~They~~ attire suggested that they were ~~working~~ office workers and had probably come ~~to~~ near the shop ~~to~~ during break.

(Note: Graded Items may be published in **Schoolwki**. So write neatly. Don't fold paper. Don't write overleaf)



Item Code:

695

Participant Code:

102

Shalini, without realizing, envied those working women. She herself had been an office worker until she was forced to quit her job when she became pregnant with Niimi. After Niimi was old enough to be left at daycare, she tried to find some other jobs but had never gotten past the first interview.

She shook herself awake from travelling ~~down~~ down this lane of memories and recollections and immediately looked away from the group. She then bought the groceries she needed and left.

...

"Well, we went to his office. He's so thin now, Shalini, ~~are~~ aren't you taking care of our son?" Ajay's mother asked in a tone that ~~she~~ ^{was supposed to be} ~~thought~~ ^{was} playful.

Just like Shalini expected, her in laws had arrived without notice. ~~but~~ luckily she was prepared.

"Of course, ma I take care of him." she replied.

"Well he must be working hard for you and the

(Note: Graded Items may be published in **Schoolwki**. So write neatly. Don't fold paper. Don't write overleaf)



Item Code:

695

Participant Code:

102

kids then. Being the sole bread earner is hard" Ajay's mother said. Shalini only smiled, she wanted them to leave ~~the~~ desperately. Ever since her arrival her mother in law had been saying on and on about how hardworking her son is and all Shalini wanted to do was make her shut up. She too was working hard, not ~~only~~ just him. Why wasn't anyone appreciating her? She has been preparing the food since morning, why hasn't anyone commented on its taste? The house ~~is~~ doesn't have a speck of dust anywhere, why hasn't anyone noticed that?

When her in laws left it was a relief to her. ~~She~~ ~~to~~ Her legs were giving away and she wanted to rest. The moment she sat down the bell rang, she heard a car entering the ~~drive~~ driveway and shouts and laughter of her children. She sighed and got up again. The children started bombarding her with small details about their day the moment they saw their mother.

(Note: Graded Items may be published in **Schoolwki**. So write neatly. Don't fold paper. Don't write overleaf)



Item Code:

695

Participant Code:

102

• • •

"What's your favourite food?" Nimi asked Arjun.

"Uhh... Chicken!"

"What type of ~~chicken~~ chicken?" Nimi asked again.

"The tasty kind... I don't know" Arjun shrugged his shoulders.

"Okay next question then, who's your favourite superhero?"

"~~Uhh~~ Hmm... This is hard... Batman! No, Superman! No no no... Uhh... wait-" Arjun thought hard.

"I got it! Dad! Dad is my favourite superhero!" the boy smiled proudly.

Shalini felt a twinge of jealousy but it was gone in a moment. ~~She~~ She smiled as she saw ^{the} happiness on her husband's face and was therefore surprised when he shook his head and said:

"Hmm... I don't think I'm ~~the~~ the superhero here."

The ~~kids~~ smile on Arjun's face fell.

"Arju, Nimi, who wakes you up for school everyday?" Father asked.



Item Code:

695

Participant Code:

102

"Mom!" The kids replied ~~is~~ in unison.

"Who packs your lunch and prepares yummy food for you to eat?"

"Mom!" came the answer again.

"Do you know who keeps the house safe clean and safe for us?"

"Mom!"

"Who takes care of you while you're sick?"

"Mom!"

"So who's the real superhero here, me or mom who does almost everything without rest?"

The kids thought for a while before it hit them

"Mom! Mom is the true superhero!" They cried.

"Exactly." Ajay smiled at Shalini "Your mother is a superhero disguised as a human, do you know that?"

She works day and night without asking for

anything in return and she does multiple jobs at

once even though she only has two hands. Mom's

go through a lot of pain to give birth to you.

They ~~are~~ have super strength, mentally and

(Note: Graded Items may be published in **Schoolwki**. So write neatly. Don't fold paper. Don't write overleaf)



Item Code:

695

Participant Code:

102

physically.

You don't need to have special powers to be a hero. You can also be just an ordinary person leading an ordinary life. Mom's are the superheroes that we can always count on. No matter what they will be there for us. Even if it is just to find a missing bracelet or to help us with something big, get it?"

The kids nodded and rushed to hug their mom, their true superhero. Shalini didn't realize ~~that~~ she was crying till she felt a tear roll down her cheek. She smiled at her husband and the small family drowned in hugs. It was a day that Shalini would never forget.

—*—