



The Question remains Unanswered.

Beep.... Beep.... Beep.... For a moment, Nandini struggled to open her eyes. The room looked strange. 'where am I? Surely it's not my home.' she wondered. Strangely, Nandini felt herself a bit weightless. And her head was throbbing. She felt an excruciating pain all over her body. It felt as if it took a minute or two for her to recognize the hospital room. Within minutes, it came back to her.... that incident.... which shook her life, forever. The memories raced through her mind and created nothing less than a fear packed horror movie.

It was a lovely Sunday morning. Nandini could not believe herself. A lower-middle class orphan, hailing from a poor family background to household has actually turned into a software engineer, that too with a university rank holder. After long Finally, Nandini felt something good happening in her life. It was her first day of internship; that too with one of the leading tech companies of Mumbai. With a new ray of hope, Nandini left for her office.

For ^{the} first time in her life, Nandini found herself enjoying the ~~same~~ scenarios on the roadsides.

The typical road side hawkers and the ~~so~~ crowds, children waiting for the buses in their uniforms, stray dogs and cats lazing on the pavements..... Nandini noticed everything. At some point, her mind was diverted.

Nandini was born to a poor farming household. Her dad and mom belonged to ~~the~~ a farming community in Tamil Nadu and came to Cochin in search of work. When Nandini was 2 years old, her father died in a quarrying accident. Nandini's mom ~~has~~ ~~stands~~ did all kinds of job to take care of her. When Nandini was 10 years old, she too died of pneumonia. From then on, Nandini was brought up by the sisters of Karunya orphanage. Nandita was good at academics. Understanding her potential and her desire to study, the orphanage started decided to help her. ~~with~~ Thanks to the different clubs ~~of~~ and villagers, Nandita finally got admission for engineering. Soon Nandita became a role model among the villagers. ~~people~~ The villagers considered her as a star of their village and ~~the~~ students took inspiration from her. ~~people~~ considered ~~at~~ her as a boon to their village and she was the favourite of the elder citizens of the village.

"Madam, hum pahoonj gaye" ("we reached" ~~is~~).
The ~~so~~ words of the Rickshawala ~~woke~~ her broke her chain of thoughts. After paying him,

As she ~~walk~~ walked towards the entrance of the building. "Good morning, ma'am! How may I help you?" The receptionist asked her, with their usual fluttering smile. ^{Nandini} ~~Nivedita~~ smiled back. "I am ^{Nandini} ~~Nivedita~~ s'yer. Actually, it's my first day. I am interning with this company." saying that, she took out her file and showed the ~~internship letter~~ joining letter to the receptionist. with the same smile, the receptionist lead her into the office.

At 5:00 pm sharp, ^{Nandini} ~~Nivedita~~ was out. On the busy ~~street~~ street of Mumbai, she walked ~~so~~ randomly. ~~Nivedita~~ felt herself on the events of the day rushed through her mind. She felt so happy... and ~~content~~ satisfied. It took sometime for ^{Nandini} ~~Nivedita~~ to recognise that she has lost her way. In between the excitement, Nandini ~~forget~~ was too busy to think about the roads and ^{her} flat. The city was completely new to her. Now she was standing on a deserted pavement. All she could see was concretes and rubbles. A mere look towards the surrounding will make it clear that the place ^{is} ~~was~~ on construction. ~~A is~~ And except for some stray animals, there was no one in sight. A sudden fear gripped Nandini.

Nandini cursed herself for getting into such a trouble. She walked backwards but couldnot understand from which direction she reached at that intersection. Suddenly, she spotted a middle-

aged man ~~in~~ ~~as~~ with a sigh of relief, she ~~z~~ rushed towards him and asked, "Bhaiya, aap please mujhe main road pahunjne ki raastha bathaao na." ("Brother, please tell me the ~~road~~ ^{way} to reach the main road"). The man asked her to follow him. A strong ~~and~~ odour reached Nandini's nose. The man was drunk. Nandini felt a bit uneasy. But she was left with no choice other than to follow him. ~~It~~ It was getting dark.

They had walked ~~it~~ for just 5 minutes when the man suddenly took a right turn. Suddenly, someone ~~leaped~~ ~~over~~ ~~her~~ leapt over her. Within minutes a bunch of middle aged men crowded around her. With a sinking feeling, Nandini recognised that she was becoming another victim of the sexual harassment. She could not understand what to do. ~~She~~ With her full force, she started to fight them, but ~~was~~ in vain. How was a girl of her age to fight and win a group of men like them? They were surprisingly strong. A few minutes more and Nandini was ~~unconscious~~ ~~unconscious~~ unconscious.

The sudden noise from the nurses woke Nandini from her thoughts. Tears rolled down her cheeks. ~~and~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ doctor ~~rush~~ Her heart-beats were increasing. Doctors rushed and ~~tried~~ checked the machines. Within minutes, ~~her~~ the Anaesthesia worked and Nandini fell asleep.

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"young software ~~brutally~~ engineer brutally raped by a group of men on the outskirts of Mumbai." The news were all over the media. prime Minister responds, chief minister responds, media people responds, ... ~~deb~~ Debates are ~~on~~ going on with full force on women safety. Different NGOs come forward to declare support for Nandini. State take initiative and the police force are put on pressure to find the ~~cul~~ culprits. For the next two weeks, this incident was trending. But what about Nandini? Nandini was mentally broken. ~~For~~ she could not control herself. ~~The~~ All these news and the frequent visits of different people made her mad. * only the words of her ~~sister~~ orphanage caretaker was ~~so~~ soothing to her.

Days passed. Soon, ~~the~~ India woke up to ~~an~~ another rape case. The usual rituals followed. everyone forgot about Nandini. ~~The~~ NGOs who were support the medias turned to capture the new victims. Many of the NGOs ~~tried~~ ~~has~~ stopped supporting her. The declarations by the government were never fulfilled. people got busy with their works and felt no more sympathy for her. As for Nandini, she tried suicide ~~&~~ twice but was saved. Through a thorough 6-month rehabilitation, she was back to normal life. But she could not return back to her usual self. ~~she~~ Now she is trying her best

for giving those rascals the severest punishment.... she is trying her best ~~to~~ for justice.... she is trying her best for making this incident a lesson to all those rapers and to the whole society.... she is ~~on~~ busy, for a social cause. But inbetween, Nandini used to ~~believe~~, ~~think~~, ~~sometimes~~ think with a sigh, sometimes to herself; sometimes aloud, "why does the shade shrink?" The question remains unanswered, waiting for ~~something~~ someone ~~or~~ ~~some~~ or may be for some imaginary century where every ~~or~~ type there will be no victims. As for now, the question seems a hard one to answer.