

THE PHOTO

RESHU SINGH

TILT YOUR HEAD
A BIT

My name is Bena.

My family can't wait to
marry me off* and
party hard at my wedding.

* to a stranger



*I don't want to get married.
Simple as that.*



But it's not so simple.



Look at me,

what am I even doing?



*Nailed
that pose,
though!*

LOOK AT YOU!



Already leaning on your HUSBAND ~

SHUT UP



Sleepyhead.

MUMMA! PLEASE shut her up!



QUIT IT!

How OLD are you?

OLDER than YOU! (with pointing hand)

It's the right time, you know...



before you are very old and no one wants you.



I won't miss you a bit.



TIK
TIK
TIK



SHE DOESN'T GET IT



You don't get it.

Yes?

Wait till you're a bit older.

I CAN'T WAIT

We will see.



Ha Ha Ha.
It's not so bad,
getting married. See?
We got to raise you
two lovely ladies.

IF you get time
from raising these girls,
I could use some help in
the garden.

Pick up your plate, Kajah!

I will be back. I am
coming. I will pick it
up later, promise

You think I am
your maid?



Ah, I thought we were
on the same team.

You goofed it
up on purpose,
didn't you?


NO

When I saw your
mom's photo back then

I had to change my mind.
She looked just like Madhubala ♥

She still does... haha.

She still does, I mean.



Me and Ma were very similar when we both were young.

We daydreamed about being superheroes. Saviours of the world!

All wrongs were righted, baddies were ninja-kicked, accidents stopped before they could happen...



Wouldn't mind another cup of tea...

Lose the paper first then!

Mom did her Master's in economics, and she used to paint landscapes.

Once she painted a pair of tigers - size of the real ones.



Bena! Make tea for papa. Will you have a cup?

But since she has to babysit the three of us, she doesn't get to do any of the fun stuff.



No.

What should I make for dinner?

I don't know.

Pulao?

I WANT HER TO DO FUN STUFF.

Oh God,
my knees.

What happened?

Nothing

So, not planning to marry? Why, Bema?

I don't know. I don't want to.

Why not?

I don't know, Mumma. I am not like you I guess.

...

What makes you think I am not happy?

You didn't have another plan. I have plenty.

I have plenty of things to do too, you know. Rather than just plans. Anyway, I like being the boss here. Papa can't do anything without me.

Not funny.

We won't be here forever to take care of you!





I don't need taking care of!

But, of course. You don't even wash your own clothes!

I choose not to. I know how to wash clothes. We have a freaking machine to wash clothes, Mumma!



Will get a machine to raise a family?

I already have a family. I want to live with you and take care of you all.



You have no idea what you are talking about. You're too naive, don't even know your own good.

Everyone knows their own good.



And their own fear.



*You gave up everything to become a
superhero to us.*

*But collected so much bitterness along
the way...*

Isn't being happy heroic too?



And I am happy
yet far from heroic.

Me, aged 10.



Ain't the one I
look like -

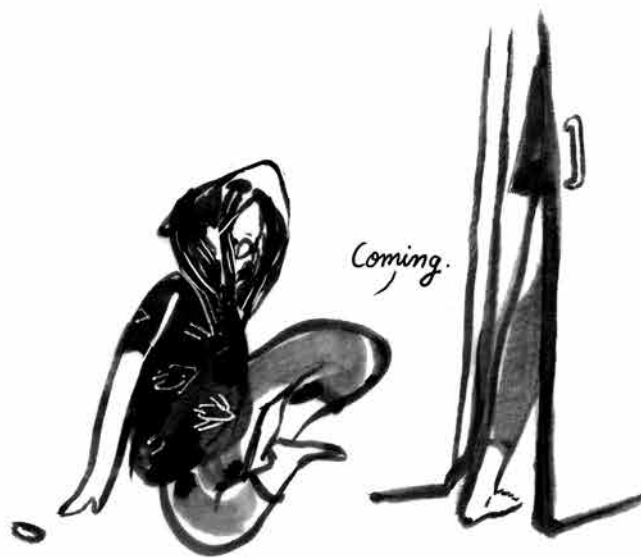


ain't the one
I long to be.



Me as a sleepyhead

Me as ninja-wizard
'the orange one'.





But I am more than my photos,



far more

END