

## Good Friends are Always close to the Heart!

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### One fine morning on a bright sunny day of the year 1996... at Mysore...

I was weeping holding my brother's hand...Yes that was the first day I began my life all alone in a new place with a new set of people. My brother consoled me and made me enter a large, spacious class room of 1<sup>st</sup>Year MLISc. I saw few boys and girls seated in the room. My brother was making signs, asking me to sit next to a girl who was sitting all alone in a row. I looked at her. She looked so pretty yet so proud. I felt reluctant and uncomfortable going close to her and so chose to sit with others. Tears filled my eyes with the very thought that my brother would leave me and go home far away. Everyone in the class room started introducing each other and was talking in Kannada which I could not understand at that time.

LIS department professors came in, wished us and made us introduce ourselves to each other. I was least bothered to know the name of the girl with whom I never wanted to be connected. I had planned to make many friends and was trying to figure out who could be a good friend. Almost every girl in the class spoke very cheerfully and I felt reassured that I would be able to make new friends among them. After an hour we were asked to go around the campus. I followed everyone and all of us in the class, both boys and girls, sat under a pleasant tree. Only that girl, who I was uncomfortable about, left the class and we got to

know that she went home. This convinced me that she was not sociable.

Two days passed by, I started talking to everyone in the class. All my classmates were very jovial and affectionate and they made me feel very comfortable because I was the odd one out, knowing neither Kannada nor Hindi. In the first class of Prof. B. Nagappa, he called out my

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first name LISA and told me your name is the abbreviation of Library and Information Science Abstract. That moment I looked at that girl big headedly, as if I had conquered her proud attitude, and thought that I had made her less arrogant. But that afternoon, when everyone was moving out for lunch she asked me, 'Sheba, shall I join you for lunch at your hostel?' I was quite surprised but reluctantly agreed to take her along with me. She came to my hostel room and saw my lunch. She spoke little about her family and instead enquired about my family and native. The next day after this meet, I had a surprise waiting for me. She got nice non-vegetarian food from home sent by her mom especially for me. I felt so ashamed of myself and realized the meaning of 'eye of the beholder'. It was then that I felt how caring she was. Yes, by now all my classmates who read this would have guessed the name of that beautiful yet bold girl -

‘Salma’. Since then I started believing she is a God given gift to me.

She took me to her house, ensured I ate good food, and safeguarded me always. She always monitored my whereabouts. She used to visit my hostel at least once, even during weekends just to give me hot homemade food. We were found together almost everywhere. If by chance Dr. N B Pangannayya happened to see me alone, he would immediately ask, ‘where is your mom ‘Salma?’ She stood by me at all times of happiness, victories, trials and hardships. We exchanged books, study materials, and went together for all interviews.

Under the University Librarian Dr. Achyutha Rao’s guidance we worked at the University Library for a few months on a project. Prof. Pangannayya helped us both get that project then. We were both chosen by American Library, Chennai as trainees. Our times of happiness, joyous moments, our travel together to my home town, and stay at

Chennai in a hostel are nostalgic. Finally we took two roads: I chose to work in Chennai and Salma at the Mysore Zoo Library. She was a bridge between me and my guide Dr. Pangannayya while completing my M.Phil. Dissertation. She used to promptly get his signatures and corrections and convey them over phone and by mail. Now I hold an MPhil, I

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can ride a two wheeler; speak fluently in Kannada - all because of her! Though almost a decade has gone by everyone knows I have a friend very close to my heart though she is miles apart. I happen to have settled in Chennai and Salma in Dubai. At any stage of my life I can boldly and loudly say Salma is one of the best friends I have ever had. I take this opportunity to thank our department for the opportunity given to reconnect with such wonderful friends again via MILAN.

*“The old man was peering intently at the shelves. ‘I’ll have to admit that he’s a very competent scholar.’*

*Isn’t he just a librarian?” Garion asked, ‘somebody who looks after books?’*

*That’s where all the rest of scholarship starts, Garion. All the books in the world won’t help you if they’re just piled up in a heap.”*

*David Eddings*