

oh!!!

wo-(man-ia)

[woo-m-uh-nia] noun, abstract most of the times, raw, unadulterated, ridiculously suave

edition 4 - june' 2014



hiding from the world
anonymously yours
all said and done

dancing my way to salvation
the modern Panchali
BASIC INSTINCTS bully - no more!
mind your business

what are you hiding? - survey

society! the beast of my life...
i love, i lie, there's more than meets the eye



unfolding edition 4

- dancing my way to salvation
- i love, i lie, there's more than meets the eye
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- society! the beast of my life...
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This time we explore the things we hide.. And why?

Were you always a dancer, but never knew how to pursue it? Do you dance when you are alone, and fear what people might think if they saw you, taking those twists and turns?

Are you a Non-Vegetarian in a Shudh-Brahman household and fear what would your parents and elders think if they found out that you hogged on Chicken last night?

Do you have a tattoo on a certain body part, a place where no one can see, just because you love Tattoos and you don't know what your people might think if they came to know that you have one?

Do you like to speak, express, but wonder what will people think if they got to know your ideas?

Are you being abused by an elder in your family and you have no courage to come up and tell that you are being taken advantage of?

Do you want to break free of an abusive relationship, but are stuck wondering what might the

society think if you go the Divorce way or leave someone?

Do you want to express yourself but don't know whether they'll understand you, do you blog/write/express anonymously?

Are you a girl, in love with a girl, so madly, that kissing her, lying next to her seems just so right, but you can't tell anyone about it?

Are you a guy, and have no interest in girls, but find guys very attractive?

Are you a guy who loves, and feels every single emotion like girls do, and want to express it, without being considered 'gay'?

Are you a person who is in love, with another human being, but you are not able to tell your family about it, or fight for it for whatever reason it might be?

ARE YOU SOMEONE WHO IS SOMEONE AND IS PRETENDING TO BE SOMEONE ELSE?

ARE YOU?

Then Come Out of The Closet!

Because Life is not about living somebody else's dreams, somebody else's life. Life is about living your own! The one that you have been bestowed with, the one that you can make or break. The one you can be proud of and let your Epitaph speak of your victories and not defeats.

It is difficult.

Very difficult to even wear our choice of clothes and walk freely. Flaunt tattoos and not be judged. Carry a Ph.D but play guitar.

We are adjudicated every single moment, for every single thing we do. If the exterior attracts so many sentiments, how will the society react if we bare the reality? That which resides within each one of us.

It's not about being gay, or not being gay. It's not about loving a person from another religion, or marrying someone secretly. It's not even about making up a story about a failed relationship.

It's just about being who we really are!

Coming out of the closet, is important for each one of us, in our own specific ways. The only question that we need to answer is our own -

**What are we hiding?
And Why?**

i am in search of

ME!

Let's hope and pray...

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.

To read more, keep scrolling the pages! Happy Reading!

Dancing my way to salvation

Do you know Peter Parker? Do you know his resume? Do you know who he is? How the society sees him? He is an orphan living with his uncle and aunt. He is inquisitive about science and technology. He works as a Photographer and has a girlfriend. He lives his life as a normal human being but then... he is something that no one knows, but everyone knows. He has an alter Ego.. He hides his identity behind this social tag of Peter Parker. In reality he is Spiderman! We all love him, don't we? Why does he need another identity?

You want me to talk about Bruce Wayne? A wealthy business man, who serves and saves the city of Gotham from evil invasions as Batman? He dons this identity of Wayne in the society so that no one questions his powers and things he does when calamity strikes.

I have a power too.
I am a normal guy, call me anything.
Any name.
But when the city sleeps I wake up as a Bharatnatyam dancer.
Weird eh?
But if you see me in action, you'll know.

I love dance. I teach my students how to express in movements. I feel powerful when I wear the Ghunghroos around my ankles. I feel potent when the music stirs my soul and I dance to the rhythm of the beats. I am a superhero to many, who seek salvation through dance. I have children who look up to me. I am their hero.

But I am still a recluse. I work as a Doctor in one of the famous hospitals in one of the metropolitan city. I have money, a car that most of the people might envy, and a girlfriend, who takes me the way I am. I go to the gym and there are people who are jealous of my physique. I have a perfect life. But I do not dance openly.

My masculine build up is often misconstrued as stiff, taut and macho. They could never accept me in a Bharatnatyam get-up, dancing on Carnatic music and beats of Mrudangam. They would categorize me as someone whom I am not.



I fear to come out of my closet.

The selected few who know me and dance with me, understand what it is to nurture a passion.
With growing dance shows, competitions and participations of people from all walks of life and statures, there is a little confidence that is building.

I want to be confident to take up dance openly. Not be judged for doing something that is not what "a man is supposed to do", or express in a different dance form. I want to be another Birju Maharaj, or Kamal Hasan, if that is possible.

But they are all TV personalities. They have overcome the stage of judgments and mockery. I am yet to reach that stage.

Someday I would like to perform for my colleagues and patients and tell them that there may be different ways of seeking peace and calm as the psychiatrist would vouch. But for me, I want to find it through dancing.

I want to dance my way to salvation and not be judged about it. I am no Michael Jackson. **I am just ME!**

The face in the Mirror

I fought against the light and walked against the tides.

I swam across the oceans to an unknown place.

I was busy making all people glad,
The image in the mirror seemed an unfamiliar face.....

The reflection asked whether I knew myself.

I smiled, but didn't know what to say
Mockery or Reality? I was given a choice

It said there wouldn't be any replay.

A Monologue began and the image spoke

I thought I was speaking all the while

The words were harsh and they tried to evoke

All the passions that appeared futile.

I assumed I was happy with all the serenity around

I thought I better look inside, one time

All the tunes of mind seemed harmonized

The lyrics of my soul just failed to rhyme.

I felt helpless as the mirror deceived

The image smiled and gave a staid glance

Fear reigned as I gathered my thoughts

And I knew I wouldn't get a second chance

I fought for the world, I played so well,

I consoled humanity with a pleasant embrace

I had concealed myself, and blamed the mirror

Because I couldn't recognize the unfamiliar face.

"Those who dance are considered insane by those who cannot hear the music."

I love, I lie, there's more than meets the eye.



"Childhood should
be carefree, playing
in the sun;
not living a
nightmare in the
darkness of the
soul."

Somewhere in the middle of a cold winter night, I was shivering with the dip in mercury inside my thick cozy blanket. It was Christmas time and like any catholic school, ours too had blessed us with a fortnight-long vacation.

I was sound asleep in my grandmother's place, a huge, old mansion- now in ruins. Pin drop silence, and the intermittent cries of dogs was the only disturbance.

As the night was slowly growing on my nerves, suddenly, I felt something, something down there. Perhaps a creature... Was I dreaming? Hell no, it wasn't a creature, but my cousin's hand. His hand! Yes. No... he was, was he?

Perplexed, I sat up, alarmed. Was he stroking me? There? I was too young to know it had other uses than peeing. He didn't stop; he went on and on and on.

This went on for almost all nights I stayed there. I was too scared and too confused, but it felt good too. My cousin was 10 years older than me, I was just 6 then.

I remember, I looked forward to my next trip, every time.
What was wrong with me?

With every trip it got weirder. He wanted to test me, that could I do better than him. I wanted to prove it to him, that I was the best. I did him, in every way possible. He was happy, very happy. He had taught me things. He moaned and groaned and for the first time we kissed.

I don't know do seven year old kids go through the emotions that I did. But it was a tingly-nice, subtle feeling. We were in

love, or so I thought, that is what they meant it when they talked of love; I thought....He was my favorite person on Earth.

I waited for vacations, I waited for him. Nobody knew about our secret affair. He was crazy for me so was I. He got me gifts and he tested me every day, I was good, I was very good. I did not want to lose him. He was mine and I wanted him to be happy with me. He was my master and I served him, in every which way.

One night at my place.... He needed me in the middle of the night, I was very sleepy. I was 10 then. I denied him, for the first time. He was angry, he slapped me. I jerked out of my dreamland and realized my grave mistake. I went running after him. I promised him that day would be his best night ever. He smiled that crooked smile and my heart melted. Yes, that day I decided to please my master, because I had sinned by denying him.

I started it slow, and then fast and then slow, he was exhilarated, he was going crazy....
He caught my head and pushed it....
He yelled and moaned and called out her name.....

Yes HER....My sister's name. She was my sister.....

I, her brother!

He broke me.... And may be ruined my orientation forever.

Or was I gay since birth?

"Freedom of expression is the matrix, the indispensable condition, of nearly every other form of freedom."

Hiding from the world

My daily commute to office by bus is a boring routine. I don't enjoy it that much unless I get a nice seat to sit and observe people. In the thirty minutes of travel from my home to my workplace I see so many stories around me.

Stories that are not in the books that I carry.

Stories which are real. Waiting to be written.

Stories that move around, like moments, which exist like space and time, and which breathe the very air that you and I breathe.

Those stories!

The woman with smudged kohl – perhaps she had an intense love-making stint with her partner this morning. The passion that the kohl spells surely isn't the work of humidity or cheap eyeliners. Her eyes shine as she diligently adjusts her dupatta over and over again, reminiscing some intimate moments. She hides her expressions as she looks down at her feet time and again.

A woman whose nail paint looks chipped – Red, exposing the nude. Perhaps she had a great deal in kitchen. Packing tiffin boxes, preparing lunch, feeding her family. No, they are not manicured nails. Just a color to spice up her mundane life. It seems so. She folds the nails inwards, hiding the nail paint.

A man whose pocket is stained. – Single, staying alone, repeating shirts? He doesn't look conscious of the stain. He enjoys the music that comes out of the ear phones, like he was born to listen to it. Blithe. Unaware. Hurt? May be not!

And that woman who wears her hair loose. I don't judge her. She has beautiful hair. She gets on the bus everyday with an older woman. Perhaps her mother. Or aunt. Or mother in law. They talk casually until the older lady gets down at the hospital bus stop.

I saw intently the other day. The younger one always sighs in relief after the older one gets down. Four stops before.

She intrigues me. I was drawn to her story that day. Like I had no other engagements, I kept staring at her wondering what her story would be. Stupid it may sound. But as my thoughts, and her actions eased my curiosity, I saw her take out a clip from her purse and pull her hair and tie it. She seemed relieved. She finally tied her hair and dabbed the sweat off her neck and face. I caught a nice good look at the back of her neck. "Carpe diem" carved on a stone was the tattoo she had. It looked amazing. I was surprised.



She caught me gawking at her and smiled. "Nice tattoo", I, immediately complimented.

"Oh thanks. By the way that was my mother in law. And she doesn't know" she added fathoming my ideas.

I simply nodded and pretended to continue being engrossed in my chore– my search of a story. She continued flaunting her tattoo – seizing the day, like it said.

Little did she know, I had found my story!

"Man is not what he thinks he is, he is what he hides."

[Osho gyaan]

excerpts from discourse of Osho

Sex is such a fundamental activity in nature that the ego of man started trying to get rid of it.

The first thing I would like you to remember: sex is natural. There is no need to make any effort to get rid of it...although I know a moment comes when you transcend it, that is something totally different. Because for centuries man has been trying to get rid of sex, he has created many kinds of perversions.

Homosexuality has arisen because we have deprived people of heterosexuality. Homosexuality was born as a religious phenomenon in the monasteries because we forced monks to live together in one place and nuns to live in one place, and we separated them by great walls.

Homosexuality is bound to happen.

It happens only in monasteries and in the army, because these are the two places where we don't allow men and women to mix. Or it happens in boys' and girls' hostels; there also we don't allow them to mix. The whole phenomenon of homosexuality is a by-product of this whole stupid upbringing.

Homosexuality will disappear from the world the day we allow men and women to meet naturally.

From their very childhood we start separating them. If a boy is playing with girls we condemn him. We say, "What are you doing? Are you a sissy? You are a boy, you are a man! Be a man, don't play with girls!" If a boy is playing with dolls we immediately condemn him: "This is for girls." If a girl is trying to climb a tree we stop her immediately: "This is not right; this is against feminine grace." If a girl tries and persists and is rebellious she is called a tomboy; she is not respected. We start creating these ugly divisions. Girls enjoy climbing trees; it is such a beautiful experience. And what is wrong in playing with dolls? A boy can carry dolls, because in life he will have to meet dolls and then he will be at a loss as to what to do!

It is a social disease spread all over the world.

Two English gentlemen of the old school were discussing old acquaintances one evening in their London club.

"What," asked one, "ever became of old Cholmondeley?"

"Why, didn't you hear? Cholmondeley went to Africa on a game hunt, and, by Jove, the chap took up with an ape!"

"An ape? Is the old boy queer?"

"Heavens, no! It was a female."

If it is a female, even though an ape, it is perfectly okay.

Yes, once in a while you may love a woman or a man. Nothing is wrong in it, because inside you both are there.

Each man is both a man and a woman, and each woman is both a woman and a man, because you are born out of the meeting of one man and one woman. So half of you comes from your father and half of you comes from your mother; part of you is man and part of you is woman.

So there is nothing much to be worried about. It may be that your man part is attracted towards other women, but because biologically you are a woman you feel afraid. No need to be afraid! Take things easily that is my basic approach. If you take them seriously you become entangled with them, you become burdened with them. And this is not such a big problem.

There are greater problems; your problem is nothing.

There are people so dull, so dead, so insensitive, that they only feel attracted towards money, or political power, or fame. You are in a far better situation; at least you are not in love with money. But these people are not thought to be perverted. They are the real perverts: money is their whole life, their devotion; money is their god.

A relationship needs a certain tension to be fulfilling, a certain polarity to be fulfilling. Two women in love, or two men in love, will have a good relationship, but it will not be very spicy. It will be a little dull, monotonous, a little boring.

My approach about all problems is that if anything is there, go deeply into it, so either you find the treasure, if it has any treasure, or you find that it is empty. In both cases you are enriched. If you find the treasure, of course you are enriched. If you find it is empty, you are finished with it.

With a man and a woman there are problems...problems of misunderstanding. They live in totally different worlds; they are two different poles of consciousness. The woman thinks intuitively, the man thinks intellectually, hence there is no meeting.

Go as deeply as possible in your relationships with women — don't be worried. Soon you will see that there is a different kind of relationship that can exist only between polar opposites.

Then go into a deep relationship with a man, because only by going deep in relationship with a man will you be able to know that all relationships fall short. Even the man/woman relationship falls short; it never brings you the contentment it promises.

Only through your own experience — not by what Buddha says, not by what I say...only through your own experience will you one day be able to go beyond all relationships.

Then you can be happy alone.

And the person who can be happy alone is really an individual. If your happiness depends on the other, you are a slave; you are not yet free, you are in bondage.

When you are happy alone, when you can live with yourself, there is no intrinsic necessity to be in relationship. That does not mean that you will not relate. Relationship is a kind of bondage, relating is sharing. You will not be dependent, and you will not allow anybody to be dependent on you.

Then you live out of freedom, out of joy, out of love.

Society! The beast of my life.....

This very society stole my love from me, time and again.
Why? Oh why, wont they let me live?

I was always into the boys' domain. A champ in games, sports. I liked being the guy in my house. I took boy like responsibilities. I was the care taker of cousins and friends. And I did care, I felt like a big brother to them all. I never quite liked the MCP nature of Indian families. I took to the wheel while my brother and father took their respective seats. I broke all the rules, of what a girl "must not" do. Anyone who saw, me already judged me as gay, or so I presumed. But I never cared. Nor did my family. They gave me all the love and freedom I deserved.

Back in my graduation days, only a year into the hostel, I was tagged a lesbian. I was rumored to have a physical relation with a beautiful senior, who was my very good friend. I did like her, but I liked many girls. Did that make me gay?

I ignored the remarks and comments; I left the groups I belonged to. I was sneered at, ridiculed. My close friends treated me like I was a monster who would eat them up. They literally ran helter-skelter to save their skins (or virginity or whatever)

The hep crowd of my batch made fun of me, and boycotted me, for the next grad years. The so-called, not so hep, boring and sincere students adopted me, became my closest friends. These people I disliked were there with me, when my so called intellectual equals left me stranded.

What was my fault? A random rumor? It ruined my friendship, my graduation years, my self-respect, my identity. Even if I was not straight, was it my fault; is it a fault in the first place? Nobody confronted me. But passed judgments, comments, and remarks and just boycotted me.

I wanted to get out of that hell, and run to save my life from two-faced people. From monsters who won't let you be

yourself. Who believed in rumors and killed individuals.

And I did. I ran away. After my Graduation I went out of India for my masters. I knew it would change my life. It made my life so beautiful, I had never dreamt of it!

Yes, I found love. She was my friend; she was with me in good and bad times. We were inseparable. I was scared to confess my feelings, because of my past experiences. I was scared of society, of people, of batch mates. My old demons haunted me day and night. I cried for nights together, sitting alone in my room.



I couldn't afford to lose her. I wanted to spend my life with her and take care of her.

I gathered courage and confessed my love, and miraculously she agreed. She loved me too, in the same way I did. My days were like dreams, my life - a fairytale. We both were in love, madly in love, and nothing could separate us. I took care of her and each and every wish of hers. She reciprocated my love with the same passion.

But then, the inevitable happened, our post-graduation was over, and it was time to go back. Back to a country where, we would be mocked, ridiculed, maybe even crucified for being ourselves, for

being in love, for living our dreams, for being happy.

Our walk to remember was now a remembrance.

We met less, we never held hands, and it wasn't the same. Meetings and cups of coffee and sips of wine were replaced with WhatsApp emoticons of coffee and wine. We chatted and talked on phone for hours but we rarely met, I tried to find reasons to go to her city, but she was always too busy to meet. Or when she did she was a different person, conscious and skeptical. Why did we come back?

My bubble finally burst, when she announced her marriage. MARRIAGE! My heart screamed so did I. I yelled and cried. I almost fainted. I was dead.

Life could not be so unfair. This couldn't be real. How can she just, get married?
Made no sense, we loved each other. Or was it a farce?

I had gone crazy. I wanted a reason, actually I just wanted her, and nothing else would make sense. We met, but when we met, she was so different, she was justifying her treachery. Some societal bullshit, I couldn't fathom.

Why would she marry someone, when she loved me? For this fake society? For her parents? For what? How will she be happy? She just left me, just like that, to satisfy her parents and society.

And I am also now, trying to please my parents, at least someone should be happy. I need to be busy, real busy....

so that I stop checking her last seen on WhatsApp. She calls me to discuss her first kiss and first make out...

I burn, she likes that, I think, she is killing me, I am drinking and smoking my lungs out.

I wish I forget her, forget the dreams I saw, I will forget my happy days, as now I will never be happy again. I have lost my happiness to this multi-faced society.

I am burning and stalking her every second. I don't know what I want; maybe she will divorce him and come back to me.

Till then I will drink and go down the memory lane...

The Modern Panchali

Panchaali! Who was she?

We know her as Draupadi too, daughter of king Drupad, born from fire thus also known as daughter of fire. But there was more to her than just the name. Her reputation, the history she carried, the titles, the blames, and much more

Let's ponder over some striking similarities between the Panchali that Mahabharata saw, and the modern ones that we see every day.

1) We do not have 5 husbands, thankfully, the law doesn't allow that,

Panchali may either be of a different caste, stature, religion, and even today she has to forsake and compromise a lot to fulfill the demands of the family and society.

5) Last but not the least, one of the

"A man does what he can; a woman does what a man cannot."

beyond all this, is what actually defines her. She is not just her father's name, she is so much more. And we all know it.

She was the one who had to marry 5 brothers – the Pandavas, only because the mother of the Pandavas ordered them to do so. The mother's orders needed no discretion and understanding on the parts of the Pandavas. They simply obeyed her, unquestioningly.

She was the one who was brutally assaulted, insulted in front of thousands of people by the Kauravas. Not only was her dignity questioned but was also staked in a mere game of dice. Like she was a commodity, who could be traded if the party lost the game.

She had to lose all her children in the very famous Kurukshetra Battle, rendered childless in a war which changed everything. She was the one who had a dear friend, a confidante – Krishna. She dared to believe in her best friend, the God she knew who would protect her no matter what. She loved a man deeply, but settled with another, just because he wasn't "fit" in terms of social status.

After reading the Mahabharata or knowing Draupadi, don't we feel we all have a similar kind of a woman inside us. There are many Panchalis in the society today.

but many of us are subdued by the patriarchal society which deploys force of not 1 but 5 or more men.

2) We may not have been traded or put at stake in a game of dice, but everyday our safety, our integrity and dignity is at stake. Be it a woman walking lonely on the road, a mother sending her daughter to school, a female employee working under a demanding boss.

3) We may not have sacrificed our children, but many women who nurture dreams as babies, have to



sacrifice them even today for the society.

4) Like her, we may have had our secret loves of our lives, and we wouldn't have dared to accept it, or fight for it. Karna for the modern

positives that Panchali, then and now has is that fire within us, even if the modern day Panchalis weren't born out of it. A fire that seems curbed sometimes, despite that, we all wish to flare anyway. She was a fire-child. So are we.

So where are we today? Centuries have passed and we still stand at the same place. A lot has changed, but a lot remains the same.

Parents are still upset over birth of a girl child, the dignity of women is being risked every minute in this nation, women are considered as an object to please men. If we talk about women who have achieved something great in life, there are very few of them like Rani Laxmi Bai, Indira Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu. Do we know women who are equal in terms of achievements as men? We can count them on fingers.

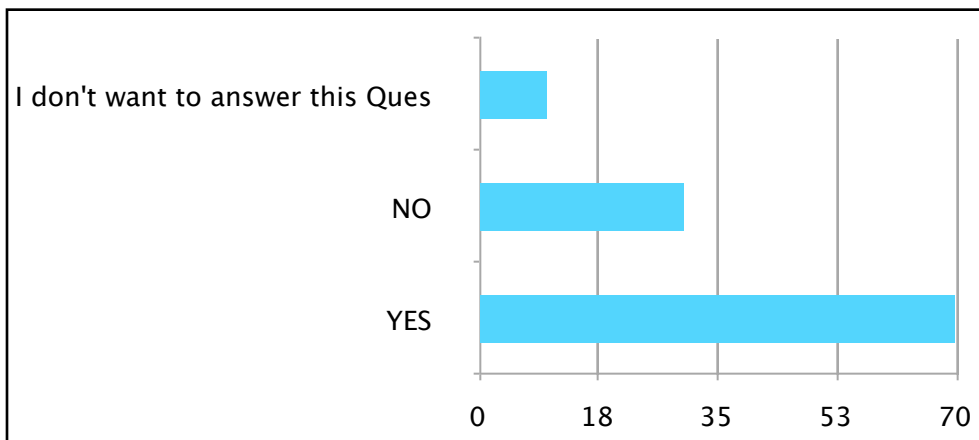
Just think and analyze... May be we have crossed that stage/era of Draupadi, but still our Society is filled with Modern Draupadis who are still surrounded by the likes of Pandavas and Kauravas.

I pray every Panchali has a Krishna in her life, who empowers her, saves her, shows her the right path, and appreciates her for who she is. Perhaps, we don't need to wait for another Vishnu Avtaar to set things straight then.

Only if men realize this!

Is there anything that you are hiding from the rest of the world, something you are afraid to bare? Say a secret passion, a dark trait, your sexual orientation?

Like always, we did a little digging into the souls of people and had them answer this question. Here are the poll results



This was an anonymous poll. We decided not to ask people to mention their names. They hid their identity and comfortably answered the question about their identity. We had no other way! There is a long way to go before we start answering polls openly without any fear and shame. As of now, all we know is, there are 70% people who are living in a closet! And 10% don't want to accept that they are! Strange lives, strange complications!

One of the leading political parties supporting a certain religion is training a group of girls to give up high aspirations and ambitions. They believe there is a huge impact of western cultures on girls today, hence they are going ahead and taking up careers and trying to become like men.

They should get married at 18, be housewives and not pursue careers.

This is what is being preached and promoted.

The US websites are mocking the Indian women who are supporting this.

There are videos and links going viral on the internet. This is the sad state of Indian women!

To those who support this horrible cause, we just want to say don't get in the way of women who are carving a niche for themselves, instead, petty people,

"Mind your Business!"

The girl who classifies boys as "stalkers", "morons" and "wannabes", who always dresses up for attention, if a guy doesn't look at her, apparently he is classified as "gay". She liberally uses "Gay" to undermine or curse a guy who may not be fit for her. To such a judgmental old girl we'd rather slap and say "Mind your business, lady!"

To the aunty in Red sari, and big bindi, supposedly a respected figure in certain community, who calls women who don't have babies as worthless creation of God, to you, Ma'am - Please mind your business.

The uncle ji who rents his house strictly to married couples, above the age of 40 having at least one kid, and judges people who don't have kids...Who dries his underwear on his tenants car and watches B grade flicks on loud volume, but has restrictions on renting his apartment to bachelors and young couples. Who says, youngsters bring in dirt with them - party and girls.

To this judgmental mortal, we just wanna say, "Mind your business, uncle ji!"

You, old fella, who hates that girl for riding a bike, looking smarter than you in that jeans and shirt... who detests girls who play sports and believes they are not meant to do things that men do...

To you, Sir - Shut Up and Mind your business

Mind your business

And to all those, who judge, interfere in others' business, who point fingers, classify people into categories, let us tell you, we are not commodities. Nor are you! So... MYB! That's right.. Mind your business!

Bully - No More!

I am a guy.

And this is no fiction. Or farce. Or a story made up to sell a women-centric magazine.

This is a place that I found to express who I am, without the fear of being judged. They said, they won't publish my name. I was happy to contribute on that condition. Why don't I want my name to be known? You will know your answer by the end of this post that I am writing. Your curiosity and disbelief will make you judge me and I don't want to be subjected to that. I choose not to.



So. I am a guy. That's where I began, right? Born that way. But I am a transgendered woman. You read it right. I have not undergone any alterations, per se, but I take the get-up of a woman. Because that's who I really am. I have never felt otherwise. I have always found myself in this mortal quandary, about my existence, that it would not let me sleep in peace.

For 22 years I lived with it. Tossing the questions my mind kept throwing at me and the societal conditioning that kept refuting them. Until, I realized, I should end this game. I won't lie here; I

hated the hair that grew on my face. Only if I could get rid of all that. But I had to pretend to be a man amidst three other.

Like God had heeded to all my prayers, one day, I found a guy who understood who I was. I could talk to him openly, I was respected, love, accepted. Acceptance!

That was the most liberating feeling I could ever ask for. I developed feelings for him. I thought he deserved it. I had found an oasis in the lonely desert. Finally he quenched my thirst. Or was it a mirage? It was a mirage.

He abused me for 2 whole years during my hostel life. He would take all my money. He would hit me blue and black for not providing him with his basic necessities. He would send me links of things he wanted for himself and make me buy it for him. I did it. Because I couldn't afford to lose that guy who had finally understood who I was. I believed that I loved him.

One day, I satisfied him otherwise. He seemed to like it. The levels of our commitments changed. Apart from spending money on him, I was supposed to satisfy him to. I liked it. I won't lie. It was perfect, only if he became more responsible and stopped asking for so much money from me.

My father was a government servant and I couldn't afford to spend recklessly on him. I did anyway. He was the one. THE ONLY ONE. Later, I came out to a few of my other friends and they loved me despite knowing who I was. Suddenly, I had more people who stood by me and accepted me. I found the guts to break free from that abusive relationship. He threatened to disclose who I was to everyone. I was scared, but I knew, I had to face that day.

Finally, before college ended I wrote a "coming out mail" to all my friends and offered them a choice to stay in touch with me if they felt like; else they were free to go. A few of them are still in touch. My family is still in shock and they hope I get well soon. I work at an advertising agency in Delhi and my colleagues are supportive. I feel the same inside out now. There is no sham, no show, and no pretense.

"Having the life of your dreams is simple: make conscious choices."

won't deny things that I have done to seek peace. I also contemplated suicide many times, not being able to live a certain way and feel in a certain way.

During my days in the engineering college, sharing my room with three other guys was the toughest thing I could ever do. I was not one of them. When they all went out for dinner, I would put on makeup and feel nice. I grew my hair until my shoulder and I

I am a transgendered woman, still finding the courage to come out openly, and live bravely. I have taken my first step towards living a life I wanted, slowly, as society changes, I will change too. It's too soon now.

Maybe someday I'll share my journey here.

Again.

Basic Instincts

Man is a simple creature defined by complexities of life and things. Something, so simple can be twisted and turned and made into something so complicated is beyond most people's understanding.

If a man is hungry, he eats. The story should end there. "What", "How" and "When", questions like these make things complicated. Is it necessary?

If he develops a liking towards a certain kind of food, he will eat. He will eat it whenever he is hungry. Either on plate or tissue paper or with hands. He will eat leaves or he will eat flesh. Human instincts will guide him. How can a caste or religion influence that? Isn't that a basic instinct of a man to reject something which he thinks is wrong and adopt something that he thinks is right?

Discretion power, the will power is the most amazing thing God has bestowed us with.

Same is the case with expressing oneself. Since time immemorial, tattoos were considered as a way of giving identity to people. In many countries, it is believed that a man without tattoos is invisible to the Gods. When kids were born in certain tribes, they would put a mark on it, as a way of identifying the kid. The tattoo remained until the individual died.



With evolving culture and society, the trend of putting marks on kids as a tattoo was discarded as there were better systems of maintaining the records. But the culture stayed and many still practiced it for their belief in the reason behind getting tattoos.

Eventually it became a fashion statement. The world is in such a state that it is divided into two kinds of people: those who have tattoos, and those who are afraid of people with tattoos. People judge those who have tattoos, for whatever reasons that may be.

There are many reasons why people get them. For self – assurance, as a remembrance, as a dedication to someone or something or any other personal reason. We do not need to justify it to anyone.

But today, when we see someone with a tattoo, we stop for a while and pass a judgment before moving on. Why? That's how society has conditioned us, over all these years and generations.

It has not changed. And it will remain so for a very long time. A simple sober girl, if suddenly breaks free, cuts her hair short and gets a tattoo, is labelled as a rebel. If a guy with formal attire holds a stringed instrument, is considered as a fanatic. A man who wears loose kurtas and dons a beard and long hair, who loves to paint is considered as retarded. Because of such classifications, professions like sports – for girls, painting, music, art, theatre are considered as ill-famed. Someone who gets a valid education and becomes an office going babu, is perhaps sane, according to the society. Rest all are rebels

in their own ways!

"Death is the easy part, the hard part is living and knowing you could be so much more than you're willing to be."

"Society will always be too fragile to accept us for all that makes us beautiful."

Is this tag necessary? If we are questioned for choices of food, music, profession, fashion and clothes, let alone wanting to live with the person of our choice. If we cannot accept someone for getting a piercing done, or flaunting a tattoo, we can never sleep in peace if we find out that our friends are gay or in love with someone from the other caste or religion.

Look around you. YOU, yes you! Look around you now! If you are alone, glued to the networking sites, open your FB page and scroll through your friend list. You won't even believe what the guy who posted a comment on your post is hiding. Does he need to hide? Has he murdered someone? No. Perhaps he is just afraid to be who he really is...

Look at the girl with those shorts, flip flops, crazy hairdo, holding a shabby guitar and posing for pictures. Look at her. Who is she, you think? Gay? Vegetarian? Non-vegetarian? Ph.d? Illiterate? Sagitarian? A recluse? A rebel? No... she is a human being. Just a human being, living in her skin, making her choices.

If you and I judge, then we are a part of that society which stinks. The society which we have been looking to mend, change and evolve.

Stop your judgments now. A human lives by her/his basic instincts. Let's just live and let live.

Anonymously Yours

What am I afraid of?

What if someone I know comes to know how gullible I am, how vulnerable I am?

What if my friends, who know some pretty details about me, also come to know about my gory ones?

Every human has two sides. A good and a bad.

To survive in a society we usually show our good side, so that we amicably get along with the other people and live in peace and mutual understanding.

I would be highly affected, if my friends come to know about the way I feel about the topic of Marriage, to begin with. I would be an outcast if I were to openly tell them how I feel about relationships and friendships. I am very different when it comes to being true in a relationship, not being mowed down by the tenets of the society.

I would be someone who would not be accepted in the society if I were to openly talk about what I feel, what I wish to do, how I want to fulfil my dreams. It's a very different perspective, which only a very trusted few understand and relate with. Therefore I write, express anonymously to escape the judgment which will inevitably come my way.

But is it really fair?

What would be done to me, if people find out that I am the one, who believes that being honest and truthful to oneself is more important than being true to the society.

What if people find out that I am the one who believes in falling in love hopelessly, just to get a feel of what it feels to be in love, even if the other person is of a different caste, different religion, different status, or same gender?

What will people say, when they find out that I support LGBT issues, I want to adopt kids before having my own. What if I pick up a kid on the road and kiss the kid and play with it, but on the other hand refuse to give alms to the kids begging on the road?

What if I speak openly about my first kiss, about how I fell in love, hurt myself and learnt a lesson?

I am scared of those fingers being raised at me who may term as an "emotional fool", "crazy head" and so many different titles.

I am constantly living in that fear of being judged.

I fear whether I will be accepted.

I fear my own people will forego me for being so headstrong about certain things, and having such weird beliefs.

I wish I weren't scared anymore.

I wish I could face my family and tell them, that get me a guy who would let me adopt a baby, get me a family who would be fine with a registered marriage, and wouldn't agree on spending lakhs in feeding the unworthy few representatives of the society who can change their take on anything, anytime.

I respect people who are brave enough to listen to their heart and take a step towards fulfilling their dreams. I want my friends to know, vanity is not my cup of tea, if shabby jeans and t-shirt with undone brows are not-so-in, then I cannot be tip top all the time.

I believe in honing the inner self, more than the outer.

I would love to stop earning and let go the need to display high status and well-paying job, and settle for an income which suffices my basic necessities and instead I would do something more lucrative and fulfilling in my free time.

I have weird thoughts, I have weird aims.

I am a weird person.

But no one knows this side of me.

I am whimsical.

If everyone were to know this side of me, then they would not be friends/family with me anymore, because straight away I would have wronged on so many aspects.

But I wish to surface sometime. At least some time. Probably when I am dead, I would want my friends and family to know, that this is how I was. This is what I truly believed in.

I wish I had the guts to confront my own self. The mirror deceives me at times. **I am blinded by the layers of "what should be" rather than "what really is".**

This is how I've lived for so many years.. And salvation will come the day I accept myself, let go the fear of UNBEKANNT, be ONE, have just one personality and exist as what I believe in! That day..I wait for!



*"You can never
are, never truly anonymise yourself. Even if you never speak to anyone,
people see you, and they get to know you for themselves."
escape who you*

All said and done

Yes.

We want the society to grow up, change, and evolve.

We want it to be non-judgmental, more accepting.

We want it to become a place where all are respected irrespective of their profession, likes, dislikes, sexual orientations, preferences or for that matter anything else.

We know there are people who are still finding a place for themselves in the society.

They live in the closet.

They have lived like that since the time they discovered certain truths about themselves. They did not find anywhere else to go. The few lucky ones did and those who did; they all live in a bigger closet -together.

They go around partying secretly, celebrating their identities and most of the others resort to solitude.

They all live in closets. Just that the sizes differ.

Some find it easier to breathe inside the space they are in, and some find it suffocating.

Some are tired of putting up another face which appeals to other people. Some are struggling in their own way to break free. Some have become pros at putting up a pretense and showing off the mask. Some are silently making a difference by supporting causes, and some are just waiting for someone to come and help them leave the closet where they had been hiding all this while. Some have even died, with the oppressing pressure and unreasonable demands. Their corpses lie there. Stories waiting to be told.

So what are we trying to do by telling stories of people who are fighting for identities?

What we trying to do?

Nothing really. We cannot do anything.

We also live in closets. We want to break free by expressing openly. By giving a chance to those who wanted to talk out. It won't serve any purpose. But there will be awareness.



The Act 377 will still stay intact.

Government will still weigh right and wrong based on religious ideologies.

People who find willing partners and those who have money will settle in California or any state/country which supports equality.

Others will sneak and satisfy their deprivation. Things will go on like they have been. There won't be any change. Because again, the society won't allow it.

“Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle. And so we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom. A man can't ride you unless your back is bent.”, said Martin Luther King Jr.

But all said and done, we project our future to be pleasant, free of hypocrisy and filled with love and equality.

We wait for the day when everyone lives happily ever after.

Sometimes fairy tales come true. You just have to believe in them!

This is our fairytale!

When they came out...

When I came out to my conservative Indian parents it was over dinner eating homemade enchilada. Just as I was about to sit at the table I broke out into tears, and when they asked me what was wrong I told them I was gay. My Mum started crying hysterically, and somehow it turned into a huge argument about how it was going to disgrace our 'family name'. She has since told me she loves me but finds it difficult to accept. We haven't talked about it or eaten enchilada since.

When I came out to my lesbian friend, she was so supportive of my effort and action. However, when I told my mother, I was in tears. Since then, our relationship has not been the same. She believes my friends influence my decision to be gay, but I believe I am who I am and I cannot change who I am. Hopefully one day she'll turn around and realize I am still her son.

When I came out, I went to my older sister crying and I could not get the words out. She started freaking out, "Hun. What's wrong? Are you okay? Are you pregnant?" I started to laugh... "Pregnant? I don't even like guys." She was beyond happy for me.

reflecting back....

What began as a mere hobby has now become an integral part of our routine. As the month begins, so does our brain storming, followed by writing, editing, gathering ideas, putting them together and finally publishing it. Bollywood gossip has now been replaced with mind boggling discussions, funny chats, arguments, debates and brainstorming. We contemplate on so many things which require attention, which are not right, which are uncondusive to the growth of the society, humanity and womankind. Every time we think of writing about a fun topic, the serious ones pose as a challenge and we decide to address it in our way. Oh! Womania has diverse facets. We are trying to explore one at a time.

Raw, unadulterated, and ridiculously suave has always been our mantra

We do not believe in diluting feelings, emotions and we serve the magazine with our quintessential speciality - **sarcasm**. Without this, we do not feel like we have done justice.

But Sarcasm doesn't work always. **Love does**. So this time, we spun our stories around love, need for love and how it is important to accept who we are and who others are. This is a very huge topic that we have delved upon, nonetheless a very important one, you would agree.

Reflecting back, we realize, we began our journey, our very first edition with a glorious coverage of Manikarnika – the tennis ball Cricket Tournament for girls in Nagpur. This was well received by everyone. It pushed us to do even better, write more about topics and people who are doing and changing the way women are looked at.

We took up a few shams that exist in the society, like the fairness fad and vain importance to the exterior beauty. Our second issue spoke about shedding away the fairness fad and embracing the real us. We received a great response, and our confidence grew miraculously.

Then came the third issue in the month of May which talked about profanity and abuses which we thought was an important topic, given that we celebrate Mother's day in that month. Our male friends appreciated our initiatives and understood that there has to be a full stop to futile, baseless abuses which degrade women unnecessarily.

We started maintaining the FB page and our blog regularly and we have had a massive response on both. We believe that if we could touch even one soul, through our efforts, then our goal is fulfilled.

These three months, more than writing about various topics, we have discovered our own flaws, where we lag and what we need to change in ourselves to aim towards a better society.

Oh! Womania is not just a means of entertainment, or tool for social change. We don't intend to be revolutionaries.

We just believe in spreading love and light.

And we assume we have successfully done that, in the last three months and we promise to be raw, unadulterated and ridiculously suave in coming months too.

To this journey and more... Cheers! *clink*

Inspirations

This issue mainly covers stories which are real and have come from people who are still trying to come out of the closet. They have generously shared their life experiences and encouraged us to put together as one edition of Oh! Womania. This is a huge topic, and there are so many stories

that we would like to share. In coming editions we wish to take it up one by one. The social stigma needs to be addressed and we are trying to do it on our own little way.

Thanks for the stories that inspire us to write, love and live.

Cover Speaks

A door, a little open.... majorly closed... someone wanting to come out... but scared and then forced to stay inside... to shut-up, stay put and just live like one is supposed to.

The tiny little door - with a psychological shield of an umbrella which will shield you from the creatures of the society - the rains and thunderstorm... The wind and hailstorm of judgments, comments, advices, pity, boycott and abandoning..... Yes! That tiny umbrella is the only protection.... But it's definitely worth the risk... Live out be yourself, bare the apprehensions....

Feedback:

We have been getting a lot of questions about why do we have one color scheme for the cover page. It's been three editions and we have stuck to the color scheme of Grey and Red.

Pooja Cornelius, our guest writer and regular reader, very rightly commented that a woman is made up of many colors, then why restrict to Oh! Womania to Grey and Red.

When we began, we had not foreseen how this would develop. All we knew was that Red meant fire, passion, love and zeal which triumph over the underlying obscurity which every woman faces. The Grey is something that we resort to, when we do not enough courage to declare our statements in black and white. Despite that, the red still flares out. We had decided we would keep Red as the highlight.

PS: We have read the comments and taken up a few pointers too. How much we follow and stay in our senses, is all up to the rotation and revolution of the earth! We are unapologetic, but we sincerely respect feedbacks and we couldn't have been more thankful! :)

So keep 'em coming.

Credits:
~Design (cover & magazine):Diba
~Cover Pic: Diba (location-Mahua vann-pench)
~Content: Diba, Yamini, Nandita,
~Editing: Yamini
~Proofreading: Yamini
~Facts and Quotes: Wikipedia
~Grammar Teacher: MAC pages and MS word.

~Choli ke peechhe kya hai...

This time we had debates about what topic should we go with. Tattoos, sexual orientation, Hiding and baring.. .Finally we realized, this all can be put under "Coming out of the Closet"! And trust me, this one month; we had issues finalizing the topic. It wasn't easy. It wasn't funny. But it was definitely fun. Luckily we knew a lot of people who were in such situations who helped us with their stories and gave us the permission to liberally mention them in this edition.

Here are some snippets.
Behind the scenes:

1. Sober US

Y: Thoda funn stuff daalna
padega mag me... wondering
apna usp kya hai??

D: Surveys

D: N rudeness

D: N choli k peeche

Y: Hmmm

D: Did u read my article

Y: Rudeness toh hai hi nai iss baar

D: :/

Y: We are becoming Sober!

2. Emo US

Y: Ill just write two general
articles fir poll ka sochti

D: Karthik n anisha is sad

D: I wana cry

D: Tis article is gettin dark

Y: Its a true story

D: :(

3. Clueless US

D: I still dunno our topic

Y: Nor do i

D: I think evry 3 editn k baad

D: V keep a story book edition

Y: Sounds good!

Y: Hehehehee and reflecting
back..

This time we at Oh! Womania are SO shades darker... uncovering the "hidden us", amidst societal microscopes. We ask, we advice, we suggest, we plea - Come out of that closet. Be yourself. We are all colorful - yes! We are colorful inside - warm yellows, and cool blues... jealous greens and feminine pink...

But looks deceive. So on the face we are SO shades of grey and a small tiny spark of red - anger, rebellion, passion, love, ready to erupt!

Until Next time:

Note: All the typos in the posts are intentional. If you haven't found any, Congratulations!

We welcome contributions from interested writers. For more details on the coming issue, please write to us at ohwomania@gmail.com.

Follow us on our new FB page : <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Oh-Womania/469025103199711>

More light, more power to everyone!
Help spread the love with Diba and Yamini :)