

ISSN 2582 6352

Issue 4.2 June 2022



THE UNIVERSE Journal

A Quarterly Peer-Reviewed Open Access Multidisciplinary e-Journal

Editor-in-Chief: C. P. Pathak

An International Quarterly Peer-Reviewed Open Access e-Journal +

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ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
ISSN: 2582-6352

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THE OFFICE ELECTION

Arya Bhandare

“Well my dear teammates, today is a beautiful day!”, Namita Mehta smiled at her sales team. I’m going to finish assessing your sales from yesterday and I hope each one of you has a margin to offer!”

A Beautiful Indian woman of Kashmiri descent, With wide, liquid brown eyes. Her face is bright, with large lips, a medium-sized nose, and thin brows. Dark brown hair pours over the right side of her shoulder, thick and velvety. Her co-workers are silently envious of her figure, which is of an average Indian height. It is for which she works. She goes running every morning and evening before and after office.

She has a strong desire to lead! When she graduated, she didn't expect to be in an insurance company. Namita didn't want to complain; she had a lot to be grateful for, especially since she'd been leading a bunch of brats. That's it. She would transform into a grumpy old boss like Mrs. Sharma in the next cabin, the instant she started calling her colleagues brats.

If her colleagues enraged Mrs. Sharma, she became a hurricane. Namita had heard her scream and throw things in the cabin next door on numerous occasions. The first time it had happened, Namita had panicked and run away. She'd walked into the cabin and was taken aback by what she saw: sales reports strewn about, employees crying, and everyone staring at their seats as if they hoped, they could disappear into it.

And Mrs. Sharma was readjusting her glasses quietly, as if she just had a pleasant, calm discussion about the subject. Namita had been staring at the scene with her mouth open. Mrs. Sharma had politely inquired if something was wrong, to which Namita had eventually responded by closing her mouth and shaking her head. She walked out of the cabin, puzzled as to how Mrs. Sharma had managed to keep her job.

Namita had confronted Mrs. Sharma about her actions later that day, when all the colleagues met for a break.

"Why did you yell at your employees so loudly? Isn't that a little out of place?" Namita had inquired politely. She was adamant about setting a good example.

Mrs. Sharma had moved her glasses higher on her nose bridge. "Young lady, How long have you been a Sales Analyst at Cover Insurance?"

"Eight months. You know tha-"

"When I'm done, you can speak." Mrs. Sharma had spoken out. "I've been in this sector for forty-three years. I am the only one with more experience. You questioned my authority over the youngsters when you disrupted my meeting this morning. Please don't do it again," The woman concluded glumly.

Following that, Namita and Mrs. Sharma had a discussion on the benefits and drawbacks of yelling at your employees. Mrs. Sharma's arguments were met with Namita's quiet defiance. Namita's senior executive had lost her temper and was yelling at her. As she expressed her views, spittle spewed from her mouth. Namita, for her part, remained silent. Instead, she stood firm in her convictions until Mrs. Sharma became confused by her argument. Mrs. Sharma undoing was Namita's high intellect. The woman finally stormed out of the cabinet, her face lit up with black orbs of hatred.

Mr. Rai, an account manager who she felt was kind of attractive, had tried to console her afterwards by telling her that Mrs. Sharma was a hard nut. Mr. Yadav, who was balding and briefing the sales report, had remained silent.

Namita hadn't had a particularly smooth first year, having made enemies. She couldn't help herself; acting like Mrs. Sharma was the incorrect attitude. True, they may be abrasive, but Namita had Job's patience when it came to dealing with people.

Here, all of the employees wore uniforms. All dressed in shirts and ties, with men in pants and women in skirts. Namita was pleased that she did not have to wear uniforms. She herself wore a checkered blue cardigan over a white tank top with the sleeves pushed up to her elbows.

Her hips were highlighted by dark blue trousers and wedge white sandals with a high heel. She brushed a stray hair from her face, frowning slightly as she monitored the sales report. It was the last report that needed to be assessed. Her brow furrowed as she smiled; every report saw a sales boost! Namita had promised her twenty-member staff, they could spend the afternoon doing whatever they wanted, if they all received better reviews.

The majority of her team appeared uninterested in their jobs. Namita made a valiant attempt. She tried her hardest to keep it engaging. She is a fairly creative individual who enjoys analysing and, as previously stated, is patient. These three characteristics make her a great analyst. However, these Colleagues were unimpressed. As a result, she was taken aback when they all saw a sales boost. She smiled to herself while shuffling reports. After all, they might be on their way somewhere.

"All right, team!" Namita smiled "I have a surprise for you! Every single one of you has achieved an increased sales revenue!"

The entire team sat motionless. Some of them appeared to be really joyful, but the majority were impatient, as if to say, "Let's get this over with."

Namita was undeterred. "So," she said, excitedly rubbing her hands together, "what do you guys want to do?"

Prakul, one of her teammates, raised his hand. They were acting exceptionally respectfully, raising their hands and not being disruptive, she noticed.

"Yes, Prakul?"

"We want you to run in today's office elections", Prakul replied.

"Contest in an office election? Why?" Namita looked perplexed. Canteen's Pav Bhaaji, perhaps? Or a cold coffee? Sumita, another teammate, raised her hand. Namita agreed with a nod.

"We want to act out a hostage situation, like if you were tied up and held captive in this cabin by Mrs. Sharma, and then just before the election, we'll draw the manager's attention to our ostensibly pre-planned plot while blaming Mrs. Sharma? Mrs. Sharma would be ruled out of the election, and you would have sole authority over the office's conduct and discipline." Yami clarified. Yami was her most intelligent colleague. The explanation made more sense still, Who would choose a fictitious hostage crisis over Pav Bhaaji? Namita realised that things have changed significantly since she was an intern.

"Are you all interested in doing it?" Namita made a slight frowning expression.

They all nodded in an energising fashion. Then one of the teammates, Rohan, began chanting, "Vote for Namita! Vote for Namita! Vote for Namita!" the rest of them followed suit.

Prakul and Yami sprung to their feet and dashed over to her workstation. "We want to firmly bind you to your chair. You'll be gagged so you won't be able to call for aid. It must be grounded in reality", Yami elucidated the situation.

"I think, I'm just not-" Namita said, unsure.

"Yippee! Let us get this started!" Prakul screamed and cut her off.

The rest of the team came forward in unison. It sounded like a zoo when they all started talking. Above the din, it's difficult to hear.

"Are you sure you should be using your-" Namita sat in her chair, her wrists bound to the chair arms by small hands yanking off their neckties.

Yami shouted above the din, holding up a balled-up tie with a roll of Scotch tape. Namita was so focused on her work that she didn't even notice her coworkers attaching her legs to the roller chair wheel. They'd also pulled the curtain in the corner and tied it around her waist and above and below her chest. Yami was trying to force a tie into Namita's mouth.

"What are you trying to put in my mouth?"

"It needs to be realistic!" Yami was ecstatic.

When Yami appeared out of nowhere, pushing a balled up tie through her lips, Namita opened her mouth to object. "Mmmppphhh!?" Namita had barely managed to cover her mouth with her hand over the tie.

"I really wanted to wear my tie!" Prakul yelled at Yami, enraged.

Yami prodded him with her tongue.

Yami began putting the Scotch tape around Namita's head, over her closed lips, as she rearranged the wadded up tie with her tongue, preparing to spit it out. Namita had assumed that they would just bind her hands and cover her lips with a hand towel. That should be doable. She had a knot around her mouth and Scotch tape wrapped over her head, much to her disappointment. She noticed ties tying her arms and wrists to the chair when she looked down.

Another teammate stepped forward, arms full of Scotch tape rolls.

Namita was mildly irritated five minutes later. Namita reflected on the fact that adults do know when to stop. She

glanced at the twenty-three empty Scotch tape rolls. Everything was encircling her mouth and head.

Disgusting.

"Mmrrrggg! Mmmppphhhhhh!" Namita tried to persuade them to stop, but they disregarded her pleas. She was attempting to be calm and in control of the situation. Her wrists, forearms, biceps, chest, waist, thighs, calves, and ankles were fastened with twenty-two ties (one in her mouth), a ripped up Curtain (to her dismay), and three ropes (really?)

"Ffrrrrmmmmffff!" Namita frowned at her team and sought to insist that they untie her right away, mortified to be left helpless. Her rage was also progressively increasing.

Now that Namita was immobile, some of the teammates were off having fun. Yami and Prakul, those br- Namita caught herself, she had to keep her emotions in check. I need to recall my sessions on managing office issues.

Yami and two other women arrived, waving Fevicol glue tubes in the air. what was that for? Namita raised an eyebrow.

"Mmmrdrrffssppprmmm! Ggrrrrmmmmffff!" She made an attempt to tell Yami.

Rather than listening, her brightest teammate began smearing the glue all over her taped mouth. Namita attempted to shake her head, but it was held by another female as the adhesive was applied.

"MMMMMMMMPPPPPPPPFFFFRRRRGGG!" Namita demanded, somewhat losing her cool.

"Namss, Namss, this was the bargain; if we got the boost, we could do whatever we wanted. Didn't we?" Yami laughed like a schoolgirl.

Namita shook her head, muttering angrily, indicating that this was not the bargain. Her taped mouth was tightening already, making it nearly impossible to move her jaw. She pondered for a moment, thinking that if they would simply untangle me, she could surely persuade them to do so. Perhaps you might employ reverse psychology on them.

That, to be honest, seemed less and less likely.

The entire squad took out their phones and began messaging and watching YouTube videos. Some of them started filming Namita, who was shaking her head and trying to reason with them. They are not permitted to use their cellphones at office hours. Her hushed groans went unheard.

Mr. Rai, an account manager, peered in as the door of the cabin suddenly opened. The roar was as loud as it had always been, wreaking havoc on the eardrums.

"Mmmhhrrrgmmffff!" Namita's eyes were anxious and humiliated as she gazed at him. Her deep flush began at the base of her neck and pushed its way up to her cheeks, indicating that she didn't have things under control. Especially for Mr. Rai, who she felt was cute and intelligent. Mr. Rai looked at the team running around, opened his mouth to say something, then shut it, shook his head, and slammed the door shut.

"MMMMMMMMPPPPPPRRRRHHHHHHH!" Namita screamed for him to return, but he couldn't hear her. What a coward! He's no longer cute in my opinion. What sort of workplace is this?

She was approached by one of her teammates. One of her sweetest colleague, Anthea.

"Mmmrrrggh?" Namita inquired, hoping for a positive response.

Namita waved a few markers in the air. "I'd like to do a face drawing on you." She said.

Namita shrugged her shoulders. No markers allowed! She envisioned all the employees coming in after office and seeing her clinging helplessly to a chair, and she started ripping at her ties once again. Anthea uncapped one of the markers and began tracing Namita's lips beneath the scotch tape.

Namita moved her head involuntarily.

"Keep your cool! Or I'll smear it on your face!"

Namita stood immobile, sighing grudgingly.

Anthea guffawed as she started sketching her lips with a black marker.

Mmpmppdf?" Namita was perplexed.

Anthea gave her a blank stare. Yami and Prakul walked up, before Namita could attempt again. Namita grimaced, not liking what she was seeing. Those two had been the ringleaders, and Namita had little doubt this had been a calculated scheme of her rowdy teammates.

"Did you see the video we put up of you?" Yami proudly displayed it for Namita to see. Namita was shown on film allowing herself to be tied to the chair and then gagged. It had already received one-thousand hits. Namita's cheeks were redder than they'd ever been. What's with those brats? The 'b word,' she said or thought. Those pampered, spoiled brats. The nerve! Putting it up on YouTube!

"Ggrrmmddffffmrrrrpppl! Namita grumbled vehemently.

"Excuse me, but this is a lot more fun than anything you offered."

Brats. Brats. Brats. They're all of them. Namita was aware that things had spiralled out of control, but she didn't know what to do. All of her preparation couldn't have prepared her for this. Normally calm and polite, the Kashmiri woman was quietly fuming, biding her time. She looked forward to the next day.

Three hours later, the squad were on their way out, waving goodbye.

"Goodbye, Namss!"

"Alligator, I'll see you later!"

"Crocodile, after a while!"

"It's so long, Namss!"

"Mmmppprrrhhh!" Namita's groaning statement was not meant to be a farewell or goodbye. It was actually an angry retort. No amount of glares, sighs, or squirming could induce them to untie her, and they had literally trashed the cabin for the last three hours. They searched her desk, threw water on her, and searched her drawers. She moaned bitterly and yanked on her wrist ties mindlessly.

Wait. Were they loosening up? They didn't feel quite as tight. Finally, Namita was overjoyed! She rubbed hard with her right hand, causing the ropes around her wrist and forearm to loosen.

Woah Free!

Namita was pleased with herself; those brats weren't quite as intelligent as they believed. she stretched across to free her left hand when-

"Miss cool, and calm! You won't be leaving!"

Namita took a startled look up. Mrs. Sharma!

"Mmpphh!" Namita let out a groan.

Mrs. Sharma was clutching a number of belts.

Where did she get those from?

Namita had no idea what was going on, so she quickly untied her left hand. Mrs. Sharma grabbed Namita's right arm and forced it back against the armchair rest. Namita tried valiantly, but her arm remained numb. The older woman simply placed a belt around her wrist and cinched it tight. The belt was worn out. Namita took notice.

"Mmmpppprrrhhh!" Namita yelled through her gag.

"I'm sure you're wondering where I got these belts." Mrs. Sharma talked clearly and without contractions. "When I was working here forty years ago, a manager could spank his colleagues. To the employees' dismay, I willingly participated in this practice.

Even though it is now against the law, I still maintain them. I'm never sure when they'll come in helpful" Mrs. Sharma gave a faint smile.

Namita's eyes were filled with rage, resentment, and embarrassment. She felt uncomfortable being around Mrs. Sharma who was so helpless.

Mrs. Sharma wrapped Namita's left wrist in yet another belt. "I'm delighted to see you in this position, Namita."

"Ggrrmggrrmmff!"

"The team did a fantastic job with the gag. I don't comprehend a single thing you say.

My non-yelling co-worker, what you need is a lesson in humility."

As soon as I'm out of here, I'll teach you a lesson in humility, Namita thought.

"As terrible as it seems, you'll have to wait here until the janitor finds you." I regret to inform you that any arrangements you planned for tonight will have to be postponed." Mrs. Sharma did not appear apologetic.

"Ffrmmmmmmfffg! Ddrmmmmmdffmp! Qrrmmmmffgddxttrrrffmmmm!" Mrs. Sharma caught the hint despite Namita's words being far too restricted to interpret.

"Do not be concerned about the other colleagues discovering you," the older woman said as she wrapped the last belt around Namita's feebly flailing feet and fastened it to the rolling chair's central pole with the fourth and final belt. "I'll make sure they know I untied you and you left early due to a migraine".

Namita's rage had finally flared. She screamed her lungs out. Shrieking into her gag, daggers aimed towards Mrs. Sharma, Her cheeks had returned to their previous hue of deep red this time as a result of her efforts and repressed rage at being powerless till someone intervenes and she was rescued.

Mrs. Sharma cracked a smile "If the janitor is unable to locate the item, I'm confident the night watchman will". She turned to leave, "Oh, and Namita?"

Mrs. Sharma drew Namita's attention.

"Those reports were not earned by your team. I provided them with the data. I've been here a long time and can typically predict how most scenarios will turn out. You're hardly the first person to become entangled," Mrs. Sharma murmured something, then quickly walked away.

Namita had not heard her leave. What she had just heard astounded her. Giving a misleading report to the team to tie her up? Namita's brows furrowed in a furious grimace and her brown eyes narrowed. Wait 'til she informed the office board about this doozy,

That is, as soon as she got out of this chair.