

VAmPirE escape & MIRRORS maze

My heart pounded as sweat dripped from my brow. I thought of what I could say to Jaya to start up a conversation. It took me 13 weeks to build up the courage to ask her on a date. I can't mess up now!

I was so nervous attending Berkeley this year and when my parents freaked out about me changing majors from Biology to Creative Writing, I thought my year was ruined. All I heard was, "Dhruv, I am so disappointed in you." I was so tired of being told how I should live my life. It was refreshing when I heard Jaya's personal exposition in one of our shared classes. Not only was she a beautiful, brilliant journalism major, we shared the same family challenges... and she was single.

I asked her if I could turn on the radio. She gave me a cute smile and I started flipping through the FM stations on her brand new 1994 Ford Mustang. An hour later, we pulled into the Barnum and Bailey circus parking lot. We walked in and it wasn't long before we found the big tent that was showcasing an elephant show.

It was awesome. She smiled the whole time and her heart melted when the baby elephant was brought out at the end. She loved it so much that we stayed after the show to watch the trainer give it a sponge bath.

Eventually we were asked to leave. On the way I saw a dusty, pink elephant stuffed animal abandoned on the bleachers. I looked around, didn't see an owner, brushed it off, and ran to give it to Jaya. The baby elephant trumpeted. As if a sign of approval, I smiled at the serendipitous moment, and we walked hand in hand towards the Ferris Wheel.

During the ride, I put my arm around Jaya. She smiled and nestled in closer. When the ride stopped, it felt as if my feet floated off the ground. Unfortunately, they literally did. As I walked down the steps, my foot tripped on something and I fell, face first, into what I hoped was mud. Jaya shouted, "Oh, Dhruv! Are you ok?" I heard an elephant trumpet, as if reminding me to play it cool. I wiped the mud from my eyes and confidently said, "What can I say, I am head over heels for you."

I cleaned myself off and got some snacks to share. On my return, as I passed the topiary display, I was blasted with a stream of water that came out of nowhere. Dripping, I again heard the trumpet and was reminded of what was at stake. I looked at Jaya who was chuckling at my misfortune and said, "Well, at least I'm clean now."

I threw out the soggy food and went to use the port-a-potty at the edge of the park. Jaya, who felt bad for me, generously went to purchase another round of snacks. I did my business, as I went to exit, the port-a-potty was thrust to the ground. The door flung open, and I spilled out... along with all the contents of the container!

I jumped up covered in blue liquid and other... matter. Once again, I heard the trumpet of an elephant. In fact, it came from a baby elephant prancing happily near the mess it had just created. Talk about hitting my tipping point. While running towards it, I pointed at it and exclaimed, "You! It was you this whole time!"

I didn't know what I was going to do if I caught it and I completely abandoned Jaya, but I knew I needed to do something. Apparently that something was chasing the beast into the Vampire Escape & Mirrors Maze. I am sure you have heard the expression, "A bull in a China shop." Well, this was much worse! The sign had most of the letters blown out, the majority of the mirrors were destroyed, and the tent was left in shambles. I couldn't afford to be associated with the chaos, so I ran and called my roommate Tom to pick me up with a change of clothes.

I don't remember the drive back or going to bed, but Tom woke me up when he threw the college newspaper on my chest and exclaimed, "Dude, your date made you famous." Wide-Eyed I read the title, "The Disastrous

Date and the Precious Pachyderm." Below the caption depicted the destroyed attraction and a baby elephant holding a pink toy. I didn't know if my eyes burned from the pink eye I got from the toilet water or out of sheer rage... but not all was lost, at least the experience gave me the idea of what to submit for my creative writing final.

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