

HANDWRITTEN
LETTERS IN THE
BOOKSTORE
Conversations in Every Heart via
Forgotten Art

Rimple





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Preface

How wonderful is the act of writing a letter! To convey our thoughts to a person, not on chat or email or on social media, but on paper!

When was the last time you received a handwritten letter? When was the last time you wrote a letter to someone? The title and the tagline of this book came to me within no time. I did not have to think hard or spend time brainstorming. One of the characters in this book writes letters to strangers and only a few of them reciprocate. Rajvir is one of them. The letters bring joy, fulfillment, and happiness to his boring life. His new journey begins when he enters a bookstore after many years. The letters keep bringing him back to the same space, again and again.

Two strangers connect with each other. They become good friends when they realize that both of them are musically inclined. This book is the journey of their conversations. How these conversations bind them emotionally over a period of time.

Over the last two years, I had scrapped many of my books after writing about three to four chapters. There were times when I was mentally tired and exhausted due to busy schedules. I ached to read a book but I could not. Every moment, I was looking for something that would relax me, calm my mind and most importantly, make me smile. This story was born then.

I can vouch that this book is going to make my readers smile and feel nostalgic. It's also a treat for all music lovers. There are handwritten letters, there's neuroscience behind music, there's a love story, there's fun, there's a social message, there are letters, exchange of gifts, dance, food for thought and more than that, there's something which resides in the corner of everyone's hearts. What is it? That will vary from reader to reader. But for sure, it will make you smile.

I have always been a musically inclined kid. Over a period of time, I read many articles and books as to why I am so influenced by music – with or without words (lyrics). And this is what I present to you in this book. In story form. For whatever I read was very technical and from the perspectives of psychologists, scientists and neurologists.

In one of the books on the subject, I came across a word – “commissurotomized.” I am sure most of my readers won’t even bother to find its correct pronunciation, much like me. Such books and articles written by experts tilt towards music performers with music technicalities, and there is hardly anything from the listener’s perspective. I have never had any formal training in music. I cannot talk much on technicalities like notes, rhythm, pitch, etc. Neither do I have any formal training in singing. It’s just that I am an avid listener. And that’s how I bring forth characters who are music lovers – trendy or untrendy, cool or uncool, they are the listeners first and foremost. They don’t hear a song. They listen to it and feel it, deeply, intensely. Listening is a more focused activity than just hearing.

To present music differently I had to use songs that people in our country listen to on a daily basis. I often wondered how many would have heard all the music pieces of Beethoven or Mozart? Forget globally, let’s speak about India. How many of us would connect to these music pieces if we read such technical books? Perhaps only a handful of us. And even that handful of people would have heard but a handful of classical music pieces. The most difficult part in this book was to connect the neuroscience concepts using Hindi music and more so, in story form. The technical books on music, although very informative, would not connect with the common reader. The best analogy I can give for this is, food versus food supplements. Food is anytime better than vitamin tablets. Because it comes with taste, smell, visual appeal, sizzle and temperature. It activates the taste-receptor cells on the tongue – which actually interact with our food – and the neurons that tell the brain what it is tasting. In the same way, stories are more effective than bare nuggets of knowledge because they tickle more senses within us. So here, I bring musical fiction, instead of non-fiction with just technical information. The way I connect a few songs, I intend to leave it to readers as to what they think or feel about it, or what their connection towards music is. Most of the connections I have made are indirect. Because, every listener is different. How characters connect to music is an individual thing.

As a reader, you will connect with a song in your own unique way. For example, one song might make you recall the happiest moment of your life – you getting an award or your loved one proposing to you. Another reader might recall an accident that took place while listening to that song. That’s exactly how our brain stores musical information – through memories, emotions and rhythm.

Preface

Simply put, there are two kinds of memories that we all know – the Conscious and Sub-conscious (or as some prefer to call it, the Unconscious Mind). The Conscious Mind understands our words. The Sub-conscious Mind only understands and communicates in the form of emotions. But where are they? Both these can also be labeled as all the information stored in our neuron patterns. Neurons are our brain wires or networks that connect one area of brain to another. And there are about 100 billions of neurons in an average human brain. I read so many myths about why Albert Einstein's was such a genius. Myths like how his brain was bigger in size than that of any normal human being. Another myth was that he has more number of brain cells (not neurons). These two are true according to studies, but they are not the reason why he was a genius (this is also according to studies). He was a genius because there were more glial cells in his brain. Our brain is made up glial cells and astrocytes. We won't go into the details of these two. But just skim over it to understand it better. Inside these lie our neuron networks. So the more the glial cells, the more neuron connections his brain had and that's why he was genius. In short, the more the areas of your brain that are well-connected, the more brain power is used. Music is one of the simplest things that can help you activate your neurons, as well as activate and connect the different regions of your brain simultaneously. In that, it is both simple yet profound. That is why music is used to cure patients suffering from amnesia, schizophrenia and other allied diseases, as it helps activate memories.

Though the book you are reading offers the same story to every reader, the reading is going to be your personalized journey.

Acknowledgments

This is the most important section for me, as this book would not have been possible without the support of so many people. Not only known faces, but also people who I have never met and who I may never meet. It means a lot to me, that they have trusted me. When I very excitedly shared with them about how this is the first musical novel ever, they very graciously extended their support. And the journey from finishing the book to bringing it to your hands has been an amazing ride; I will be honest and say it looked very long to me.

With this, I extend my heartiest gratitude to my Parents for being very supportive during my writing process – for putting up with my moods, for giving me the much-needed space, isolation and privacy. My brother and my sister-in-law who understood why I could not be on Skype calls for months together while writing this book. My friends whose calls and messages I did not answer. To my own special gang – Mahua, Harshil (Ram), Bhavi, Sonali, Swapna and Anil for reading the first draft of my book and giving me honest feedback within a short span of three to four days amidst their busy schedules. To Asiya and Shaziya for helping me understand the depth of a piece of Urdu poetry. And to all the members of my reader's club and writer's club. Their support motivated me to write more, read more. I don't know what story I will come up with after this. It may or may not be as simple as this one, but as long as I keep reading, I know I will keep coming up with some more stories. Thanks to the wonderful set of like-minded avid readers in the group. At times, I feel inferior when they discuss the kind of books they read. I feel like I am no match for them. But then I tell myself, *"It's ok. I read my kind of books and they read their kind of books. There's something for everyone."* And that thought makes me feel good about myself.

And most of all, I express gratitude from the bottom of my heart to those, without whose support the book may not have been the way it is. Discussions on movies and lyrics have been reproduced with kind permission from Sony Music Entertainment India Pvt. Ltd. and Team, Super Cassettes Industries Pvt. Ltd. (T-Series) and Team, SaReGaMa India Ltd. and Team, Venus Worldwide Entertainment Pvt. Ltd. and Team, Rajshri

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Lots of Love and Gratitude to “Love in Letters” for being the inspiration behind the story.

And last but not the least, I acknowledge all the brilliant writers who bring out the finest words with their songs. This book is a tribute to all the wonderful writers out there, for touching people's hearts with their words. We cannot imagine Bollywood movies without music. With this book, I salute your talent as lyricists, singers and music composers. Very few people realize that each word carries a powerful vibration within itself – be it in written or spoken form. They have their own frequency and energy. Listening to them or reading them is about matching their frequency, connecting with the feeling or emotions they carry. Special thanks to all authors, movie makers and story-tellers for making our life more interesting and entertaining. And finally, all my readers. Thank you so much for reading this book. Keep smiling!

Take your cup of coffee, sit near window or on a comfortable couch. It's time to be nostalgic and have a “*pachpan inch*” smile on your face.

Chapter 1

His cabin was overflowing with bouquets, gifts and congratulatory messages. Office staff was busy with drinks, music and dinner. Everyone was gleeful and high on achievement as though they were the ones who had bagged the prize. Rajvir, their CEO with the Midas touch, had nailed it again. This was the fifth consecutive year he had received the Best Entrepreneur Award. He looked younger than his age. His company had been witnessing more than 50% growth for the last two years.

Rajvir was the most sorted businessman you could meet and he was so young! And yet as he stood in his cabin, sipping masala tea with his eyes fixed on Mumbai's skyline and the Bandra-Worli Sea Link, he looked alone and lonely. His facial expression was blank. This achievement was not uncommon to him. And at this moment, it didn't even matter to him. He was neither sad nor unhappy. But millions of thoughts were racing through his mind.

Where was his mind racing? What did he really want in life? He had everything, yet he was missing something deeply. There was no excitement left. He was not a social animal who enjoyed loud music, discotheques and loud social gatherings. He resisted business parties. But for the last, he normally didn't have much of a choice. He would show up for barely five to ten minutes at business parties and leave. Only in exceptional cases would he make himself available in parties for an hour or more. Challenges did not deter him, be they related to sales, taxation, employee management or accounts receivables. He had no friends, family or girlfriend. All his so-called friends were there basically to discuss business related issues, markets, economics, etc. They all preferred to hang out at restaurants for a drink followed by dinner. In the past, many girls had tried to woo him, but with no luck.

He was Rajvir Shikhavat, a successful self-made billionaire, an eligible bachelor, but what was he beyond that? He had achieved many things, but he had lost his real self. After his grandfather's death, he had immersed himself in his career. His mind chattered a lot, his expressions existed only in his imagination or in his diaries. Business problems never bothered him. He was

good at dealing with them strategically. His existing business did not excite him enough. He craved for something new and exciting.

There was a knock on his cabin door. It was his Executive Assistant, Katherine, a fifty-two-year-old lady. She came in to bid goodbye for the day. Rajvir thanked her for staying a bit late to complete an important work.

It was already 10 p.m. He left the office soon after Katherine did. He loved to drive the car, even in traffic. It gave him his personal space. It was his music time. He would not answer calls while driving and would become immersed in listening to music and singing to his heart's content. In the past few years, he had not read many books for he did not have the time. He would spend weekends watching movies. But music was handy. He purposely dedicated his driving time as music time. And that was the reason he would never crib about the traffic. By the time he reached home, he would be too tired to read or watch a movie. But nothing could keep him away from his diary. Writing in it gave him clarity in his thoughts. He would feel light after emptying his thoughts into his diary.

The next morning, he woke up late. Woke up with a faint vision of his dreams where he saw himself in a bookstore. The bookstore somehow kept popping up into his mind. He slept last night with only one thought in his mind – what next? He was wondering if his dream had answered the question! It was already 11:30 a.m. by the time he got ready for office. He was again confused whether he should go with his heart and go to any bookstore or dismiss the call and go to office. He stared at his bookshelf and kept staring. And then, as though he got an answer, he changed into a loose brown pajama and loose white shirt.

Rajvir was an attractive young man and the loose clothes did nothing to hide his physique. If anything, he looked more boyish and innocent, wearing wayfarer-shaped eyeglasses.

He felt good that he was not in his formals. He called up Katherine. Before he could speak, Katherine told him that the team of lawyers had reverted on defaulters. They couldn't take much action besides issuing notices. Even if they sued the clients, it would take years to get the payments. He listened to her patiently and just replied, "*Fine. I shall think about this.*" Rajvir told her that he was taking leave today and if she had anything urgent, she could send an SMS. For Rajvir, that was huge.

Finally, forwarding all his mobile calls to the office landline, He decided to spend the day with books. He missed those hours at the bookstore, browsing through books, running his fingers across the covers, feeling the smooth print underneath his fingertips.

He entered the only spacious bookstore in Mumbai, which was also the coolest, and walked towards the fiction section. He first glanced at all the books. It seemed as though the books were calling out to him to pick them up, to read the story within them.

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini caught his attention. Leafing through the book, he found a green folded paper tucked between two pages of the book. “FOR THE ONE WHO FINDS IT,” it said.

Rajvir found it strange. He kept the book back on the shelf and began looking at other books. But even as he kept picking up book after book, his mind kept going to “FOR THE ONE WHO FINDS IT.” He went back and bought *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

Being a voracious reader, once upon a time, he had the capacity to read one such book a day. As a child, he could finish a book of 300–400 pages in two to three hours. He reached home and with childlike excitement, settled into the cozy reading corner of his lavish triplex penthouse and started reading.

Chapter 2

He opened the letter hurriedly.

Hey Stranger Friend !

Hope you are having a lovely day. Did anyone tell you that your smile is contagious? Keep Smiling It really suits you. I know we have never met.. but I still know you. You are your own best friend. If you are looking for a friend, just stand in front of a mirror, wave a hand and say Hi to your best friend who will always be with you no matter what. The person in the mirror loves you unconditionally and me too

Have a lovely Day !

Love,
A Friend 



Love in Letters

Rajvir read the letter again. The letter sounded silly but the very act of reading a handwritten letter was amazing. “*Handwritten letters, a lost art, lost art of communication, expression, feelings,*” he thought.

He continued reading the book, but the contents of the letter were still running at the back of his mind.

Finally, he reached the last quarter of the book. He had fallen in love with the two female leads of the book. Khaled Hosseini filled Rajvir’s eyes with tears. He was mesmerized

by the incredible strength of these two characters and the depth of their relationship. Even in painful conditions, they did not lose sight of love, faith, compassion, humanity and goodness.

As he finished the book, a plethora of emotions opened up within him – love, pity, fear, anger, sacrifice. He felt helpless. For some reason, he wanted to cry and scream. There were hardly any moments in the book that made him smile – maybe the last line did.

It was already 1 a.m. Rajvir was still in Hosseini’s world. He had missed this *book world* that one lives in while reading a particular book.

“*The silly little letter had connected him with a warm and emotional book. Life is good,*” he thought, and fell asleep.

Rajvir was up on time and on his way to office. Upon reaching office, he continued his regular routine of meetings with HODs and took an update on every area of business. Accounts Receivables and the Legal team shared their concerns on overdue payments and explored options to recover them. None of the strategies suggested by them seemed effective to Rajvir. He asked them to come up with an idea where they could do this without getting into legal wrangles, as it would add to their cost, time, and would have nothing more than delayed payments. There was no duration guarantee to the legal process. He walked out of the conference room and saw an A4 sized paper on one of his employee's desks on the pin-board. It read, "**There are no strangers here; only friends you haven't yet met.**" His mind raced back to the letter. Though he was very practical and logical when it came to business, he believed in following his heart, his intuition. At this moment, his heart said, "*This can't be a coincidence.*" He now knew what he had to do. On reaching the bookstore, he quickly browsed through the pages of books to see if there was a letter. After scanning through almost fifteen books, he once again found himself staring at the familiar handwriting. Why was he looking out for another letter when he had found the first one so silly?

Buying the book, he reached home and settled in his cozy corner with tea, chips, vegetable sandwiches and millions of thoughts. For the first time, he had bought a book without reading its blurb. He read the letter before starting the book:

Hey Stranger Friend!

It's such a beautiful day. Hope you are having one!
What you are looking for is already around you. Just
be present

Be consciously aware of things that are going
around you and you will realize that solutions want
to find you instead you finding a solution to your
problem.

All locks are manufactured along with a KEY

Life loves you 😊

Love,

A Friend



Love in Letters

Coincidentally, this time he had picked up a book that was about friendship and bonds – *Kartography* by Kamila Shamsie. He finished about three-fourths of the book and went to bed. The next day, he took the book to his office. He spent some time reading it in office whenever he got an opportunity. By the end of office hours, he finished the book. He reflected through the parts of the book that he had highlighted with a marker.

Amazed by how beautifully the author had described it.

He took a quick recap of the book in his mind, wondering at the climax! The entire book was like poetry. Almost confusing. Why would an author change the writing style at the end? But he was in love with the book and accepted the book with all its flaws, like one accepts one's family with all its flaws – a tale of human errors, decisions and forgiveness.

On the way, he reflected upon everything about the day – *you are your best friend – look into the mirror – solutions want to find you – all locks have keys – life loves you – a friend – payment recovery – stranger friends – there are no strangers here, they are friends you haven't met* – and in the outside world, music filled his car...

Yaaronnnnn... dostiiii badi hi haseen hai...

Suddenly the line hit a high pitch:

“Tann mann kare tujhpe fida,” broke into his thoughts.

As the car rode over bumps and potholes, the volume rose and fell.

Rajvir started whistling and stopped by the same bookstore once again. He looked for books in fiction, poetry, Indian fiction and non-fiction this time.

This time, he would not go looking for letters. But he would allow his intuition to choose. His eyes fell on the Harry Potter series. He excitedly decided to re-read entire series over the weekend. The fantasy fiction would be a relief after the two emotionally charged books.

On the way back home, his eyes fell on a eunuch on the road. The eunuch was begging. Rajvir knew how when you ignore eunuchs, they start to knock on the window glass. Lowering the window glass, he gave some money to the eunuch.

As Rajvir rode away, an article he had read long ago played in his mind. The article reported how eunuchs touch, pinch and abuse you till you shell out money. *“Our society needs to accept them so that they can get jobs and are not forced to beg.”* he thought.

Hunger overpowered Rajvir as soon as he opened his apartment door. Today he wouldn't settle for fruits or salads, quick noodles or sandwiches. His cooking style was musical – he combined music and songs with cooking.

The notes of *Piya Basanti Re...* wafted through the kitchen.

As Rajvir started to chop onions, he was back in the song once again. In the hilly areas of Northern India. How beautifully Ustad Sultan Khan had sung the song.

The old man getting out of a car followed by his daughter. The old man going to the place where he had first met his beloved who was no more. The beauty of flashback. Narrating the story of love at first sight between an innocent mountain girl and a terrorist. Rain-washed greenery, swirling clouds, the weather, the daisies, the feeling of love at first sight when Nauheed suddenly breaks into “*Kaahe Sataaye Aajaaaaa...*” while lost in beautiful thoughts, waiting in her balcony.

He remembered how the video ends with “end of part one,” continuing the love story in the next song of the album. This music video wasn’t merely showcasing music but had an equally beautiful story behind the song in the video. As the song ended, a line he had read long ago flashed in his mind.

“The past is a foreign country: they do things differently over there.”

The Go-Between, L.P. Hartley

By now, Rajvir had finished chopping an onion, green chillies and a tomato. He was all set to cook *anda bhurji*.

As Rajvir tossed the chopped vegetables into hot oil, the next song started playing. “*Sayonee...*” the singer’s soulful voice rose above the sizzling oil. His mind drifted to the visuals of the song. The song was by *Junoon* – a Pakistani band that had introduced Sufi rock music to India, that blended the electronic guitar and drums with tablas, Urdu lyrics and Pakistani folk style with Indian music ragas. A music video showing a child’s hunt for its soul mate, who grows-up after two couplets, and still doesn’t find the significant other. The video narration toggles between the story of the boy, the *Junoon* band singing the song and traditional Sufi dancers performing Sufi dance. Rajvir connected some music pieces with visuals which enhanced his connection to the music and generate deeper emotional responses. Sometimes his own imaginative visuals and sometimes visuals from the

song video. This kind of listening is very effective at reducing stress levels and easing depression.

Rajvir felt his stress melt as the visuals of his favorite song played in his mind. The lyrics of this song always left Rajvir with the feeling of wonderment and appreciation. How did the lyricists manage to bring out those finest pearls from the oceans of their minds? How did they do this? Science was obsessed with the neurological patterns of the scientists. Had anyone ever studied an artist's brain?

The next song started playing:

Shaam savere teri yaadein aati hain,

Aake dil ko mere yun tadpati hain

O sanam mohabbat ki kasam...

Your memories haunt me day and night,

They torment of my heart,

Oh, my beloved, I swear on love...

In this song, the character featured has two births, the first as a King of Egypt and the second as a traveler, explorer, and wanderer. This wanderer comes to explore the pyramids of Egypt, the place of his previous birth. In the above lines, the lyricist/artist is talking about a woman with blue eyes, from his previous birth, whose memories haunt him. Her father committed a crime for which as the King of Egypt, lyricist/artist had to put him behind bars. The wanderer in the song has found a centuries-old key and is singing the song. He knows about his previous birth.

Mil ke bichhadna toh dastoor ho gaya,

Yaadon mein teri majboor ho gayaa,

O sanam teri yaadon ki kasam...

It has become a tradition to part after meeting,

I have become so helpless in your memories,

O my beloved, I swear on these memories...

Samjhe zamana ki dil hai khilona,

Jana hai ab kya hai dil ka lagana,

Rimple

Nazaron se ab na humko girana,

Mar bhi gaye toh bhool na jaana.

The world thinks the heart is a toy,

Now I know what it means to love someone, what it means to give your heart to someone,

No matter what happens, don't let me vanish from your mind's eye,

Don't forget me even if I die...

Aankhon mein basi ho, par door ho kahin,

Dil ke kareeb ho ye mujhko hai yakeen,

O sanam tere pyaar ki kasam...

You live in my eyes, but still far away somewhere,

You are close to my heart, I believe,

O my beloved, I swear on your love...

Every time he listened to this playlist, he was fascinated by the beauty of the song, the emotions in the lyrics and the video, that eccentric, smooth and velvety voice of the singer.

Rajvir knew that his emotional intensity was uncommon. Did he listen to a song differently because he loved the music? Or did he listen to a song differently because his emotional intensity made him a good listener? He did this effortlessly, subconsciously. His breathing and pulse rate synchronized with music. Over a period of two decades, he had heard all these songs so many times that now, it became a habit for him to connect them to beauty.

Chapter 3




After filling his stomach with a scrumptious dinner, and his heart with music, he settled down on his bed, opening up the Harry Potter box set with childlike joy. Removing all the books from the box, holding each one in his hand, feeling them, smelling them, flipping through the pages wondering if the books thought him to be a boring person. “*Why is he wasting my time?*” He picked up his favorite, “Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban” and as he turned the pages, his eyes fell on the familiar writing, “FOR THE ONE WHO FINDS IT.”

He read the letter...



Rajvir had a big broad smile on his face this time. He was falling in love with the contents of these letters that were simple, yet beautiful. This time he gave a thought to the contents — *There are no coincidences. The right things come to you the right time.* He opened the two earlier letters and kept all the three side by side.

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<p>Hey you lovely reader !</p> <p>Looking for a sign? This is it. Go ahead :))</p> <p>There are no coincidences. Right things come to you at a right time</p> <p>All you need to know is revealed to you at right time</p> <p>Lots of love from a friend </p> <p> Love in Letters</p>	<p>Hey Stranger Friend !</p> <p>It's such a beautiful day. Hope you are having one.) What you are looking for is already around you. Just be present</p> <p>Be consciously aware of things that are going around you and you will realize that solutions want to find you instead you finding a solution to your problem.</p> <p>All locks are manufactured along with a KEY Life loves you 😊</p> <p>Love, A Friend </p> <p>Love in Letters</p>
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Hey Stranger Friend !

Hope you are having a lovely day. Did anyone tell you that your smile is contagious? Keep Smiling. It really suits you. I know we have never met, but I still know you. You are your own best friend. If you are looking for a friend, just stand in front of a mirror, wave a hand and say Hi to your best friend who will always be with you no matter what. The person in the mirror loves you unconditionally and me too.

Have a lovely Day !

Love,
A Friend 


Love in Letters

He closed his eyes and saw them in his mind's eye – *Contagious smile* – *What you are looking for is already around you* – *Be present* – *Looking for a sign* – *The right things come to you at the right time* – *The bookstore* – *article* – Suddenly Rajvir knew what he had to do and started jumping excitedly. But he had to wait till Monday. Meanwhile, he began reading the book. But it was difficult for him to concentrate! He was now curious about these letters. Who wrote them and why? Why did the person leave them in the book?

What did he or she get out of this? These letters had given him an excellent idea. Even his office team and legal experts had not come up with such an innovative solution. He finally gave in to his train of thoughts and checked for “Love in Letters” on internet; there was no website or page with that name. Then he checked on Facebook. He found a community page with the graphic of a similar envelope as profile picture. The posts were filled with people sharing pictures of the letters they had found and their experiences. The page had more than 50,000 likes.

One post said:

I don't know how to put how I am feeling right now into words but I have to THANK YOU. To sum up in a few words, my day was going extremely shitty. Then I walked into a bookstore and while I was turning the pages of the book, I found a blue post it-sized note with these words beautifully written inside, “I am wonderful, I am capable of doing anything that needs to be done.” I cannot express how happy I became after reading your message. This little act of kindness of putting inspirational notes inside books MADE MY GODDAMN YEAR. THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!!!!!!!!!! GOD BLESS YOU. AND KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK! Thank you again!

Another post was an article link shared by someone who had received the letter in a book. Rajvir began reading the article.

So, I was reading this book and feeling deep emotions while I was turning the pages... Suddenly I saw a piece of paper with a handwritten note slip through a page. The note said, “Today is the best day of my life. Love: A Friend.” On the other side it said, “Love in Letters.”

Obviously I was curious because this simple note had made me feel good. I immediately looked for them online. In the “About us” section, they mentioned they would like to stay anonymous (fair enough). What was interesting was, just by filling up a simple form I could request a love letter for anyone I cared for. What a wonderful way to make someone feel special and valued. A perfect recipe to make someone's day! It was heartwarming to see so many people value the emotion of love. Such unknown acts of love and kindness touch people into many different ways. Someone made my day special by putting this note in my book at the bookstore. Now it's my turn.

Another post was an article by “Love in Letters” on the Facebook page's “Notes” section:

Music is the Sound of Love!

Music... just like LOVE... can touch your soul. You have music for every mood... basically three moods:

1. *You keep playing the same song again and again and again.*
2. *You enjoy listening to any song that is being played and...*
3. *You keep changing songs after every few seconds... not listening to even one complete song.*

Isn't it awesome? People list down a range of moods, but when it comes to music, there are only three moods. 😊😊

But do not confuse moods with emotions. We are always in one mood or another. Emotions are for a brief period and they are intense. When you are experiencing an emotion, listening to related music amplifies your emotion.

Bollywood, Indie-pop, ghazals, instrumentals, dance numbers, etc. Music is like the sound of love, the sound of your heart, the sound of your feelings, the sound of your soul.

No party is complete without music, no get-together is complete without music, no wedding seems complete without music, no drive is complete without music, no journey is complete without music and also no Bollywood movies are complete without music. You are a religious person, you may listen to devotional music, you are a spiritual person you may listen to meditative music, and so on. But there is music for all kinds of people.

You are happy, you play music. You are depressed you put your earplugs and shut yourself from the world out there, with music. You are irritated, you plug in music to avoid fights. You are sad, you listen to music that describes your feelings or something that can lift up your spirits.

Life would have been empty and boring without music. No matter what, there's no substitute for music. Even if you are a dictator, music would still continue to be a part of your life. Haven't met anyone who doesn't listen to music.

The sound of rainfall is music – tip-tip-tip-tap-tap-tip-tap. The sound of tick-tick-tock-tick-tock in clock is music. The sound of heartbeat is music – dhak-dhak-dhak-dhak. The sound of birds chirping is music – kooo-koooo-chuuuuun-chuuuuun-kau-kau. The sound of waves is music – guuurrrr-splash-guurrrr-splash-guurrrr-splash – small waves coming together to form

a large wave and whooosshh hitting the beach. The sound of laughter is music – hhaaaahhhaaaa. The sound of high-five to friends is music. The sound of crying is music.

Music is everywhere. Sometimes we just aren't aware. Music is a form of love!!! Forget everything and dance to the music in you and around you.

Lots of Love,

Sound of Music!

The article resonated deeply within Rajvir.

He browsed through the other articles by “Love in Letters.”

Love is “Ek Cutting Chai”

You must be wondering about this article's title. No matter what you are doing, which part of the world you are, if you are an Indian, ek cutting chai surely brings a broad smile on your face, water in your mouth, some freshness in taste and a rejuvenated mind. A sip of adrak-wali or masala chai brings a contentment that's unbeatable. “One sip” ... That one sip – especially in the rains. And if it's a “Tapari” chai, the glass of chai with raindrops falling in it, you are completely wet and you feel cozy when you put your hands around the warm tea glass. A blessed sensation. With raindrops kissing your face, you keep blinking your eyes, holding a glass of chai and enjoy the coziness – the cold breezy rains, a warm feeling in your hands and a taste in your mouth... the complete refreshment of mind, body and spirit... and even emotions... a moment that makes you forget your tiredness... Isn't this love? Love is all around us, perhaps we never notice it. All these small-small moments are love moments. Do you have any such moments?

Rajvir was enjoying reading the articles. The smile remained constant on his face as he read them one by one. He saw how beautifully the small moments of life had been noted and described. He understood that some things are difficult to put in words and someone out there was trying to give words to feelings which are not easy to describe or express in words. He was genuinely appreciating the person's fulsome efforts.

The Magical Mumbai Rains

Mumbai's rains bring the same images in a flash... every year, it's a scene that grabs the world's attention. The sky looks beautiful when it rains, the cool breeze during the rains is like the tinge of kesar in Indian sweets and blows your mind. Brings a sense of unreasonable happiness, a sweet smile. While it brings its lifeline (trains) to a halt, it also mesmerizes with the sweet smell of mud. While it blocks the roads, it brings the selfie mood in. While it makes it difficult to step out of the house, it makes for a perfect mood to relax beside a window, sip a cup of adrak wali kadak chai and read your favorite book or listen to soothing music. While the umbrella and raincoat are useless, it's fun to get drenched while the streets are full of puddles, and in such waterlogging, you don't know where a pothole is. Walking is still fun and it's more fun when you are walking and a car passes by in speed, resulting in water splashing all over you. And you still smile with an open heart... know that you are a blessed soul. While it rains, your eyes may struggle to keep themselves open, yet the shivering breeze and cool rains keep your spirits up, to enjoy getting dripping wet in rains.

The Mumbai rains give you a special feeling, more than the rains in any other part of globe. The Mumbai rains have their own magic.

Rajvir was getting nostalgic. Feeling the simplicity in each article. They did not have flowery language, but spoke directly from the heart.

A Long Drive with Music is My Idea of a Party

You don't know where to go. You just want to keep driving. It's been one week; every day I just want to go for a long drive, all alone with some music. I don't know where. Just keep wandering like a nomad. At whatever pace. It's a lovely moment when you know you don't have to reach anywhere, but just enjoy the journey. Soothing music. A journey song what your heart hears. Your ears may hear a song but your mind sings another one. The one that expresses what's going on inside you. You don't want this moment to stop. Driving all alone with no restrictions of time, no hurry to reach a point. There's no end. You can choose to end the moment you want and begin again from anywhere. This is what I think is living in a moment. It's a moment of love. A moment of peace. That serenity residing in you suddenly lights up with a smile. It doesn't matter what song is being played at that moment. 'Coz when your heart experiences happiness, even a sad song will make you sing with a smile. Hey! Wait. Are you

talking to yourself? What are you talking? Isn't this feeling a beautiful one? You have fallen in love with yourself! Or you have fallen in love with life. I can feel and live my deep innocence, my source, my core... any normal person would say I have fallen in love with a guy. But is that the only love people understand? The word "Love" is so overused that it has lost its essence. I feel so happy with my own company. A long drive with music, alone, is my definition of a die-hard party. What's your definition of a party? Think, think.

People are always in a hurry, calculative, so-called busy, chalta-phirta time-table, slaves of the mobile, even while driving they work or they are on a call. You may say that you are enjoying yourself. Maybe... but did you live your inner world for a few minutes today? Do you know what your imaginary world consists of? Everyone loves day-dreaming about their secret fantasy world. Those who deny it are actually lying (don't take it to heart, take it to your kidney ☺) Everyone has a world in their imagination... from childhood... As you grew up, you kept it aside in a deep corner of your unconscious mind... Sometimes, you secretly smile, imagining your world. If we didn't have this world of imagination, humanity would have been deprived of so many wonderful books, movies and music. You read fiction that comes from an author's imaginative world. Even biography, history or mythology books have stories. They are from real life, but they too are a story. And to write them, the author would have to play and replay, and replay them in his mind. Even movies, without the writer's story and director's visualization, we would have been deprived of entertainment. Since the time we grew up, we are surrounded by stories. Would this be possible without spending some time with your own self? – without any disturbance – no people, no internet, no gadgets – just you and your inner world!

It's my beautiful world, imagined by me, created by me, lived by me and cherished by me. I love all of its ups and downs. As it is, the small breakdowns never bothered me much. It's fun to enjoy both.

Every day, you too can choose to chip off each layer that you have built around you! It's as easy or difficult as you say.

Ohh... now you know why you are enjoying this moment!

Rajvir wondered at the simple yet profound attitude of the writer. Finding beauty and happiness in every moment. In this article at least, he found out that the writer was a girl.

Then his eyes fell on another article.

Around Me!

It was a Saturday morning. Lazy, yet exciting. The first day of the first workshop was just a few hours away.

I am a tech freak person, yet the feel of physical diaries and colorful pens brings me more joy than anything else. I was carrying my handmade paper diary with a Kashmiri work cover and at least fifteen colorful Uniball pens. I was on my way to a cafe, to meet my friend and discuss some ideas. Early morning 9 a.m. The crowds were yet to make their way into the cafe. The ambiance was perfect. I could turn my creative mode “ON.”

Slowly, people started coming. Every alternate table was now occupied. On my table, there were empty plates and my open diary. I was jotting down all the ideas that my friend and I discussed. Suddenly, I looked around to the table on my left. It was a bit of a longer glance, not the same as staring, however. Then I looked at the table to my right, and again, I glanced for a bit longer. I allowed my eyes to wander all around the cafe – what I noticed was, each and every table was occupied by two people and each of them were busy on their own cell phones. No one was talking to the other. It seemed like they weren’t aware that they were with someone. It seemed, that they were sitting facing a wall. Without me uttering a single word, my friend looked at me. He saw that I was looking all around the cafe. “Yes, I noticed,” he muttered.

Ours was the only table with a book and pen. Our phones were kept aside.

I had noticed the same thing last weekend too, at Nariman Point. The Marine Drive and Nariman Point sea-facing belt was crowded with people, and all I could see was everyone was busy taking selfies!

Didn’t people feel the graze of the soft air by the sea-side? Didn’t they find the sound of waves soothing? Is traveling only meant for check-ins, uploading pictures and tagging yourself on social media? Do people really do everything for their own happiness and pleasure?

In the cafe, I inhaled the deep aroma of hot chocolate and coffee. I sank into the soothing ambiance. The first sip of my hot chocolate without cream. It was like heaven for me. Some time for the self without the cell phone or calls. Some time to spend with the person who you had come to meet. Cell phones were meant for emergencies, when they were made. Slowly, people started creating something called “Made-up Emergency.” Seeing this, I left two strangers love letters on the seats of the café, with the note on top “FOR THE ONE WHO

FINDS IT,” and in the letters were messages of happiness that could light up their day. I was in cafe for two-and-a-half hours. I saw the people who picked up the letters and was glad to see them reading and smiling. The curiosity in their eyes was delightful to see.

Hopefully, some new thoughts and initiatives will incentivize people to notice their beautiful surroundings and the people around, instead of concentrating on their gadgets. Awareness is the key.

Happiness is around me – people around me, surrounding, my aura, my books, etc.

When I lift my eyes from my mobile, I notice a coffee mug, I feel its weight, I smell my drink, I can describe my world; I notice the breeze turning the pages of my books, I notice the blades of grass, I notice dryness and heat 'coz of delayed rains, I notice the freshness of colors when it rains, I smell the first rains and everything.

Rajvir was totally in love with the articles. He was now more and more curious about the girl who was writing it. He looked at the “About us” section of the page.

The short description in the “About us” section read:

A letter, handwritten and crafted just for you or someone you love. Let's go all out and bring back the old-fashioned way of showing you care! Email: sendme@loveinletters.in

Followed by details:

Just imagine a letter in your name, at your doorstep. Totally normal right!?

But now imagine, opening it and reading oodles of love on a piece of paper. Thinking that someone has taken some time out of their day to write you that letter. Imagine the love that overwhelms you, imagine the feeling of knowing that someone out there was thinking of you.

That's it, that's the feeling we want to deliver – without boundaries, word limit or filters...

We are bringing back the old-fashioned paper and pen way into the way you communicate. In this virtual world, people have literally forgotten the way it feels to receive a call or physical handwritten letter on a birthday or for other

festivals. Today, we spend more time on Facebook/WhatsApp/etc. Our wishes have become restricted to online wishes. Our real feelings become our social media status and messages. People are too busy to write letters, hesitant or shy to say how much you matter to them and how much they love you!

We are here to revive the traditional or non-technological ways to express and communicate the world's most beautiful feeling called LOVE.

LOVE for yourself, LOVE for your family, LOVE for your friends, LOVE for your colleagues, LOVE for neighbors, LOVE for strangers and LOVE for friends who eventually become your family. And GRATITUDE for all of the above.

LOVE IS BEAUTIFUL when expressed and communicated.

Love is intangible and can only be felt! Who do you want to express your love to?

Let's revive the traditional LOVE that connects a Heart to a Heart and not one online account to another online account.

LOVE IS LOVE, not an online formality!

Love understands no boundaries. Love is a universal language, without any language.

Rajvir was trying to find out who the person behind this initiative was. No trace of her in any post. He recollected the article that mentioned that she would like to be anonymous. Rajvir was figuring out a way to find her. To begin with, he decided to request for a letter as mentioned in their "About us" section. He filled up a "request for love letter" form via the tab "Request a Love Letter" on their Facebook page. It asked for his name and also the name of the person to who he wanted to send the letter, including the address where it was to be sent. He nominated himself. There was a question in the form: "Why do you want to nominate this person for a love letter?"

He wrote: I want to nominate myself because... Then stopped. Should he really be doing this? Thinking twice, he wondered if he should do this. After a few moments, he cancelled the form. He needed some time to think about how he should proceed. He thought it would be wise to first give it a thought and then take some actions.

Chapter 4

Saturday morning, began with “Love in Letters” on his mind. His curiosity was doubled. He wanted to remain anonymous. After considering all the options before him, he decided to send an email from an id that did not reveal his name or other details. His eyes fell on his favorite shelf that consisted of knick-knacks, show-pieces and figurines. Ting tong! Joker! That’s what his new email id would be – IamJoker@email.com.

He drafted an email from his newly created id.

To: sendme@loveinletters.in

Subject: Hi Love in Letters!

Hi Love in Letters,

Coincidentally, I found three letters of yours in the books I bought from Owlery Bookstore. First, I want to thank you for those lovely letters. Handwritten letters are nostalgic. They have helped me find a solution to one of my business problems.

If you don’t mind, may I ask you why you write these letters? How did you get an idea like this? May I please know who are you? Your name?

Thank you for all the love, my dear stranger friend.

From a stranger friend – Joker.

Finally, he clicked on “send.” On the Facebook page, he had seen that the page admin typically replied within two hours. He crossed his fingers, hoping to receive a reply at the earliest. The whole of Saturday passed without a reply. Sunday morning came and went. And so did Sunday evening.

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