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SHAME SHAME SHAME SHAME SHAME SHAME  
DENIAL DENIAL DENIAL DENIAL DENIAL  
F CONSEQUENCE FEAR OF CONSEQUENCE  
SELF-ESTEEM LOW SELF-ESTEEM LOW SELF-  
ON ISOLATION ISOLATION ISOLATION ISOLATION  
ESSNESS **HOPE** LESSNESS HOPELESSNESS  
P GIVE-UP GIVE-UP GIVE-UP GIVE-UP GIVE-  
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# HOPE

To find out who assaulted the woman she just met from her husband's workplace, the protagonist of the story rushes to the office where it took place. As she tries to piece together what happened, she happens to pick up conversations among the victim's colleagues and their point of view towards her character.

Unhappy with what she has witnessed she moves on to find more clues that can help her get a clear idea of who the attacker was. Coming across her own husband she notices something that makes her dig deeper into the mess she is already in. Only to find out that the assaulted woman wasn't the intended target, But was trying to protect someone from becoming the prey to the attackers intent.

Finally, with all the pieces together, the protagonist adds her piece to the story confirming who the attacker is. Hereby realizing that she's the sole link that can complete the connection between these victims and the attacker by becoming their voice and their only hope to attain justice. But will she do it? Is the decision she has to make.





Over the years, we've seen an alarming increase in the cases of assault, especially women. These incidents not only affect the victims physically, but also leave most of them emotionally scarred for life.



Due to this sudden incident, the office environment has plunged into chaos.



I WANT  
EVERYONE SHE KNEW  
BACK IN THE OFFICE

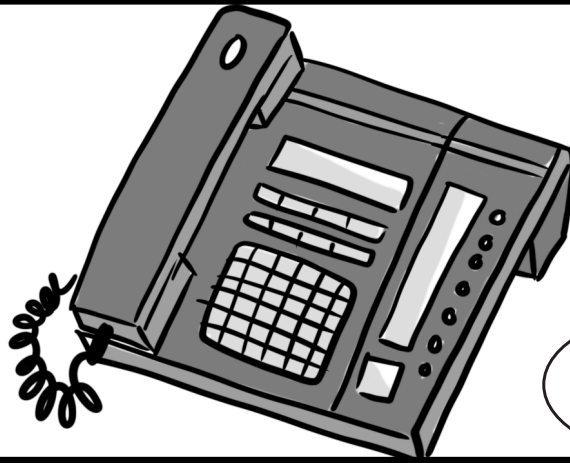
RIGHT NOW!



YES SIR!  
SURE SIR!







HELLO

CAN I SPEAK  
TO JESSIE

OH.. ABOUT HER.....  
THERE HAS BEEN AN  
INCIDENT.

SHE HAS BEEN TAKEN  
TO THE HOSPITAL

SOMEONE  
ASSAULTED HER IN  
THE OFFICE.

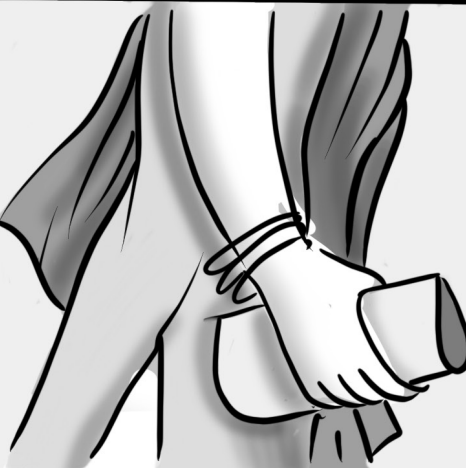
THE OFFICE IS BEING  
INVESTIGATED BY  
POLICE NOW.



WHAT!

WHEN!

I WILL BE  
RIGHT THERE.



She grabs the purse and leaves.

I HOPE IT'S  
NOT TOO LATE!

Worried about what might have gone wrong, she blamed herself for this.

HAVE I REALLY  
BECOME THE  
VICTIM?

MAYBE I SHOULD  
SPEAK ABOUT IT.

HAVE I STAYED QUIET  
FOR TOO LONG?

WHAT HAVE I  
DONE

I THINK SHE  
WAS RIGHT

I SHOULDN'T HAVE  
ASKED HER TO LEAVE

I SHOULD HAVE  
LISTENED TO HER

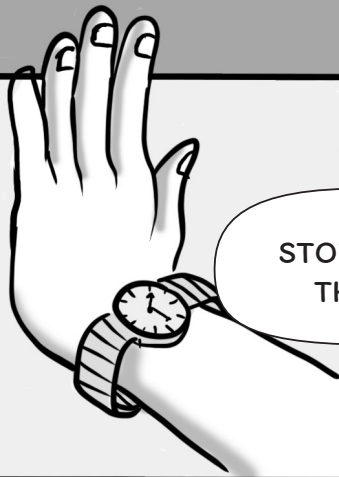
I MUST REACH  
TO THE BOTTOM  
OF THIS.

MADAM,  
WE HAVE REACHED  
THE OFFICE





She makes her way to the office as quickly as possible. But she is stopped by the officer



STOP RIGHT THERE!

SORRY MADAM

THIS IS A  
CRIME SCENE NOW  
I CANNOT LET YOU  
THROUGH.

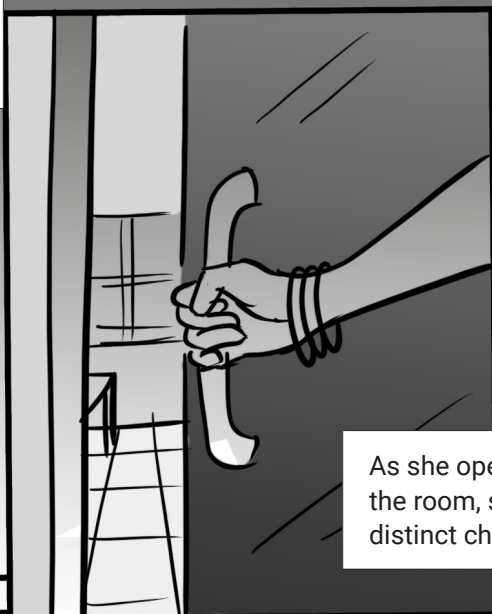
BUT I AM HERE  
TO MEET...

YOU CAN WAIT  
IN THE NEXT ROOM IF  
YOU WANT TO.

BUT, I CAN NOT  
LET YOU THROUGH  
RIGHT AWAY.



Amidst the chaos, she made her way to the waiting area. Hoping to find some answers



As she opened the door to the room, she could hear the distinct chatter of people.



WHAT A MESS!

I WAS ALMOST HOME

YEAH, ME TOO.



I AM DONE WAITING !



I ALWAYS KNEW SHE WAS TROUBLE.

AND NOW WE ARE STUCK HERE, IN A MESS SHE HAS MADE.



WE MIGHT HAVE TO  
GIVE OUR STATEMENT  
ABOUT HER,  
IF IT TURNS INTO A  
POLICE CASE.



IT IS STANDARD  
PROCEDURE, WE NEED TO  
FOLLOW THIS.



A POLICE CASE?

DOES THAT MEAN I  
WILL BE INVOLVED  
IN HER CASE?

MEANS DEALING WITH  
COURT PROBLEMS?

I KNEW SHE WAS A BAD  
INFLUENCE TO CARRY.


NOW EVEN WE ARE  
GOING TO GET  
DRAGGED IN THIS.



BUT, WHAT WILL  
THEY ASK US?

WE BARELY  
KNOW ANYTHING  
ABOUT HER.






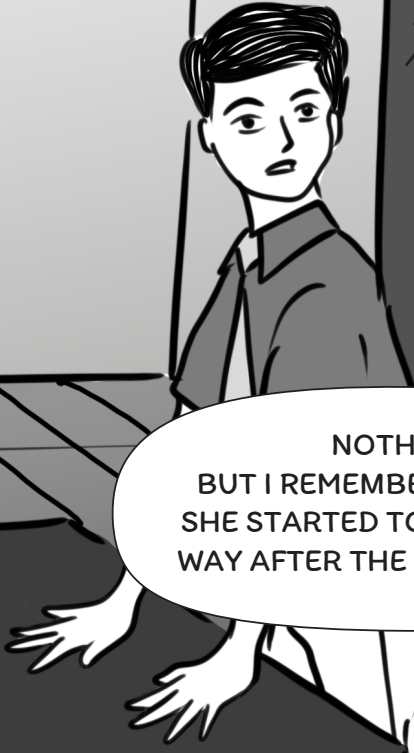
HEY, DON'T WORRY SO MUCH, IT COULDN'T BE THIS BAD.



EASY TO SAY, FOR A MAN.



HEY!  
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?



NOTHING,  
BUT I REMEMBER VERY WELL,  
SHE STARTED TO BEHAVE THIS  
WAY AFTER THE OFFICE PARTY.

She could make it, Jessie was not that popular among her colleagues



YES, BUT WE BARELY  
USED TO TALK.

THEY MIGHT ASK US HOW  
SHE WAS IN GENERAL.  
AND IF WE NOTICED  
SOMETHING GOING AROUND  
IN THE OFFICE THAT MIGHT  
LOOK WRONG OR HELP  
WITH THE INVESTIGATION.

YOU SHOULDN'T DRINK  
SO MUCH IF YOU CAN'T  
HANDLE YOURSELF.

WHERE WAS SHE? IF SHE  
WASN'T AT THE PARTY?

MAYBE SHE WAS WITH HER  
BOYFRIEND.

These conversations that happened  
around her kept eating her from within.



BUT, IF SHE WAS BEING  
TROUBLED, THEN WHY DIDN'T  
SHE TELL IT TO ANYONE?

I THINK SHE LIKES THE  
ATTENTION.

EXPLAINS THE FANCY ATTIRE  
SHE ALWAYS FLAUNTS.

She started to question herself, if she  
was doing something wrong.

Her only hope was her friend in the HR department, but even that seemed to fade away.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PROOF?

IS THERE ANY WITNESS  
THAT CAN SUPPORT YOUR  
ALLEGATION?

WE CAN'T JUST TRUST  
JUST YOUR WORDS.

Here she knew she had lost the battle, and so she decided to stop fighting, she had no proof of what happened nor a witness that can support her statement.



Everyone kept remembering vague memories about her and continued distorting her image.



IS THIS THE SAME  
PERSON I MET?

DID I JUST KNOW  
A PART OF HER?

WHICH PART SHOULD I  
BELIEVE IN?

Her mind was confused, which image to believe, the one she knows, or the one the people around her speak of.



She decides to leave, go out and search for answers.



Answers that will help get the complete picture of what is happening.





HOW COME YOU  
ARE HERE?

WELL, YOU  
SHOULDN'T BE HERE,

IT'S CHAOS RIGHT NOW,  
BUT WE WILL GET IT CLEARED.




I GOT MY TEAM OF  
LAWYERS WORKING ON IT.

Notices the ink stains on his shirt.

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light-colored top, is pointing her right index finger towards a man's shirt. She has a concerned expression.


YOUR SHIRT,

ITS STAINED WITH INK

A man with dark hair, wearing a grey shirt and a white tie, is looking down at a red ink stain on his chest. He has a frustrated or angry expression.

OH! I ALMOST FORGOT ABOUT THAT.

YOU SHOULD LEAVE NOW, WE SHALL TALK ABOUT THIS AT HOME

A man in a grey suit and white tie is talking to a woman with short dark hair and glasses. The woman is holding a folder. In the background, a woman is standing in a doorway.

AND YES, SEND ME A FRESH SHIRT. I NEED TO GO FOR A MEETING ONCE I AM DONE HERE.

SURE SIR!

It happened so quick, she was unable to talk to him, so many questions unanswered.





The chaos in the office was much bearable than the chaos in her mind. The questions ran rampant and the answers were nowhere to be seen. The guilt troubling her had now turned into doubt. Doubt that needed to be thought over and understood.



it was dark and seemed like no one was there. But she was wrong.



A person turned as soon as she entered the room and started to look bewildered, As if she couldn't see her.



WHO IS THERE?

OFFICER?

IS IT TIME FOR THE  
STATEMENT?







DO YOU KNOW  
HOW JESSIE IS?

I DON'T KNOW,

BUT, SHE HAS BEEN  
TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL.

SHE TRIED TO HELP ME.  
BUT SHE GOT HURT  
INSTEAD.

IS SHE GOING TO BE OK?  
IS SHE HURT BAD?

DID THEY TELL YOU  
ANYTHING?



Jessie was running late that day and was about to miss the lift.



I halted the lift for her.



And we happened to become friends in the coming days.



They got along really quickly

I am used to people sympathising about my condition, but she just began a conversation with me, like she went past my disability and reached out to me as a person.

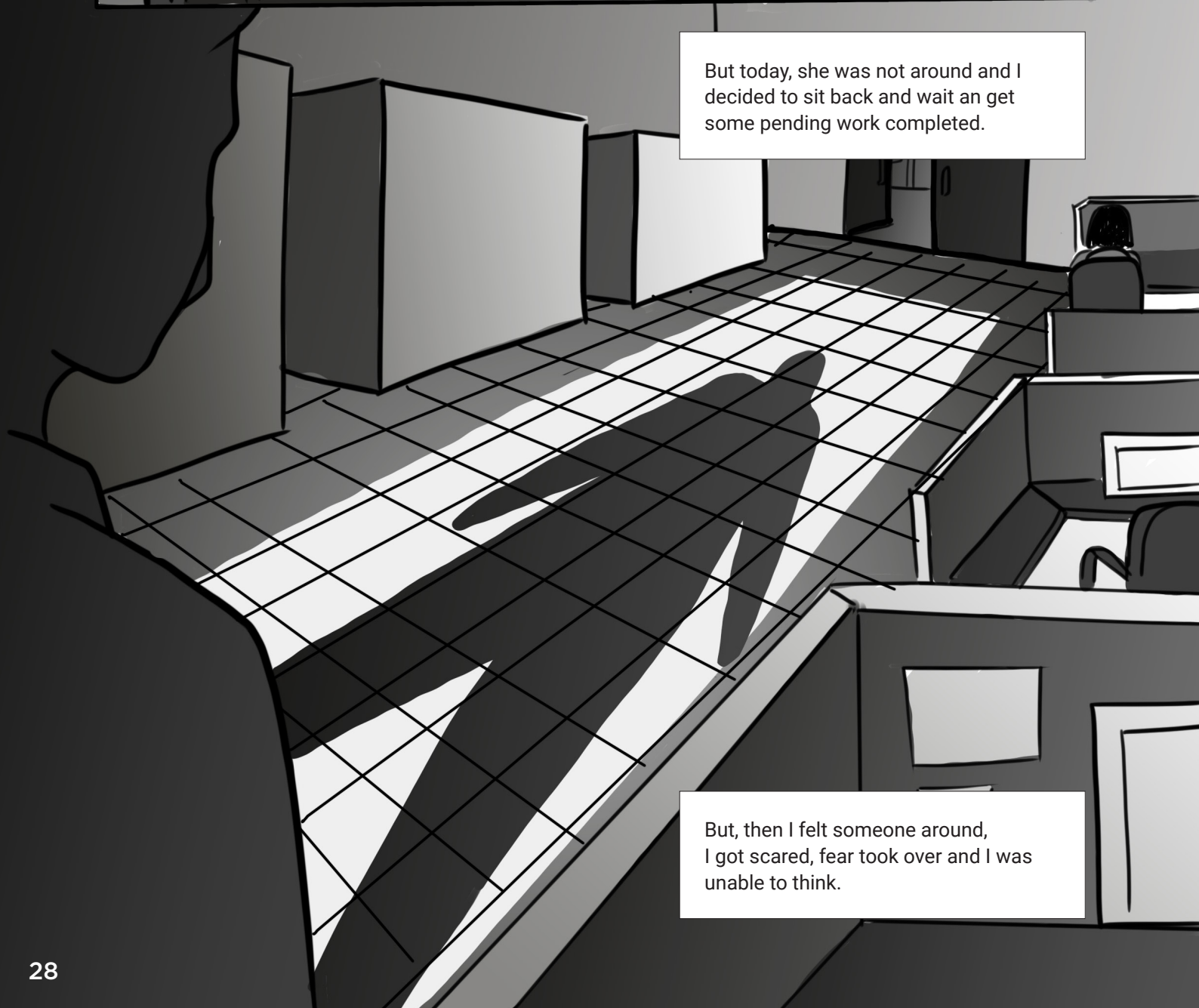
I felt accepted, i felt as if she saw the person in me rather than the disability i had.  
And she made sure i never felt my shortcomings, even in critical times like these.



I was working alone here and I heard something. I let it slip as i thought i was over-thinking it.



But today, she was not around and I decided to sit back and wait an get some pending work completed.



But, then I felt someone around, I got scared, fear took over and I was unable to think.

He grabbed me from behind, his strength  
overpowered mine.  
I wasn't expecting something like this, i didn't  
know what to do.  
Couldn't run away.  
I wanted to scream for help. But his hand  
pressed against my mouth very hard.

I couldn't move.


I had lost hope



But, then i herd her voice.

STOP IT!

GET YOUR FILTHY  
HANDS OFF HER!



She defended me.  
I knew, I was in a bad  
situation and so was she,  
Couldn't run away from it.

So i tried to find something on the desk  
to defend myself if he comes back at me,  
I got my hands on a pen and i slashed it in  
the direction of the man,



I don't know if it did any harm but i  
lost my balance and fell.  
I hit the floor hard and i fainted.



But.



No one was there to help her.





SHE WAS ALWAYS PROTECTING ME.

NOW, I BELIEVE SHE WAS NOT ONLY HELPING ME BUT MAYBE, SHE WAS TRYING TO PROTECT ME AS MUCH SHE COULD FROM SOMETHING, OR MAYBE SOMEONE.

UNTIL TODAY.



THIS EXPLAINS THE INK STAINS ON THE SHIRT!

She was clear now, the attacker was her very own husband.



I FEEL SO HORRIBLE, SHE WAS HURT BECAUSE I WAS NOT ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.

DID YOU KNOW HER?  
ARE YOU A FRIEND OF HER?



I AM MRS. KAPOOR

I AM THE BOSSE'S WIFE

I AM THE LAST PERSON  
SHE MET BEFORE  
COMING BACK HERE,

I AM THE ONE WHO  
KNOWS HER STORY.





HELLO

She showed up to collect the files. I got her in and made her some tea. and we were able to chat a bit.



And then i got her the papers and the documents my husband asked me to hand over.

HERE ARE THE FILES THAT  
NEED TO BE TAKEN BACK TO  
THE OFFICE.



JUST LIKE YOU, SHE SAW  
RIGHT THROUGH ME,  
SHE NOTICED THE MARKS  
ON MY ARMS.  
AND THAT I WAS  
MISTREATED AT HOME BY  
MY HUSBAND.



She told me her side,  
How she also became a  
victim of his intents.

She opened up to me and told  
me her side of the story.



She told me about the  
night of the party,



Everyone was enjoying, they were  
drinking, yes. but she decided to  
leave a little early than usual.



She was waiting alone at the bus stop,



It was already dark and she knew she won't get her usual bus, so she held back for a cab.



And then he came by,

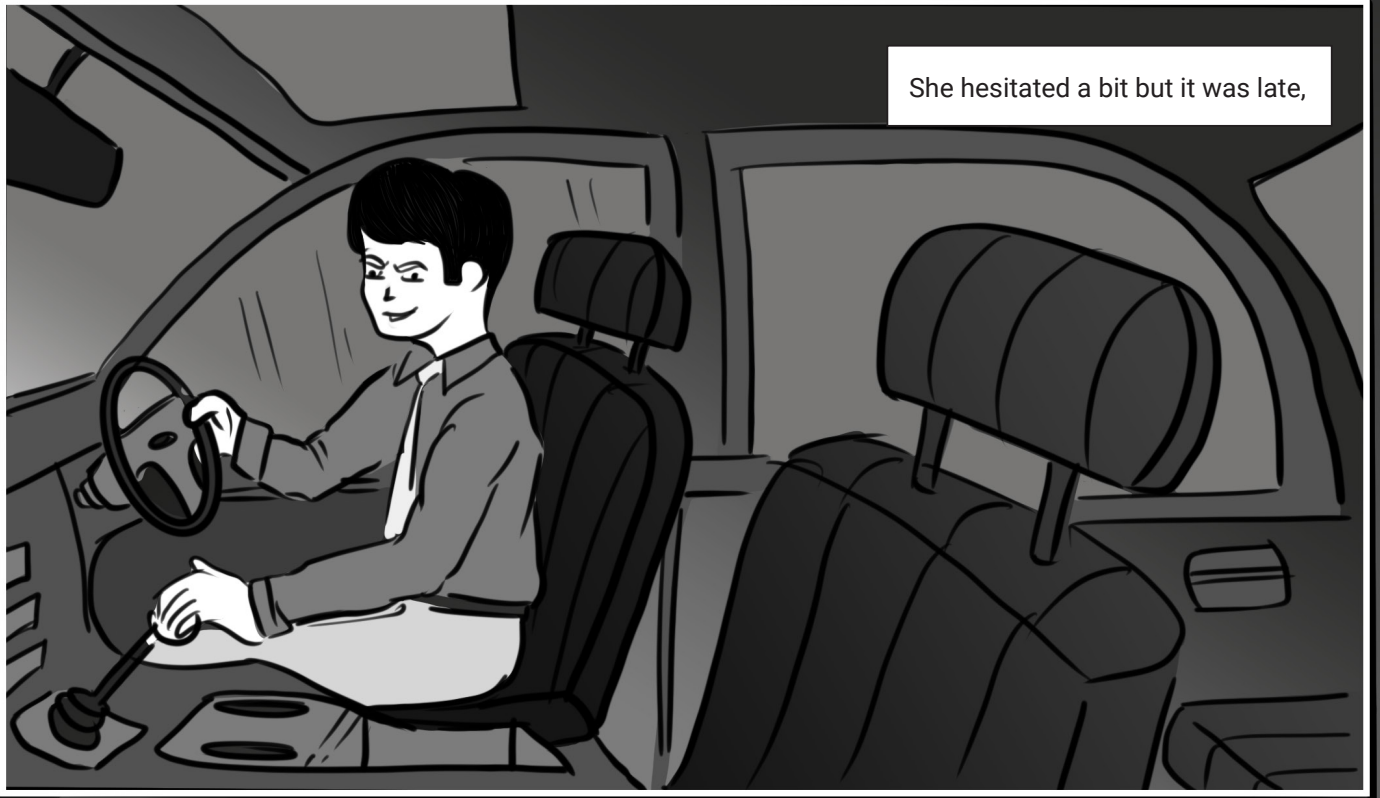
WAITING FOR  
SOMEONE?

My husband, he was the one who gave  
her the lift to her home that day,

ITS GETTING DARK,  
LET ME DROP YOU.



She hesitated a bit but it was late,



and she did the mistake of trusting him,





They had almost reached her apartment.

THE WAY YOU WORK

She wasn't expecting this.  
He was touching her.

THE WAY YOU  
PRESENT  
YOURSELF.

I LIKE IT,  
I LOVE IT.

She was confused and scared,  
she turned to ask him to stop.



But it was too late.

NO...

She could not see clearly or move.

It was becoming hard to breathe

STO...P

His weight was pressing on her,  
she couldn't move.

HEL...P

She calls upon the last  
strength that remained in her,  
And pushed him away,



Enough to stumble out of the car,  
and ran as fast as she could,  
Getting away,



She was ashamed of herself, that  
she couldn't do anything  
That she let it happen.



Went to her home and locked  
herself inside.





Her body was losing control  
Her legs felt numb,  
Then her hands, then her body,  
And finally her eyes..

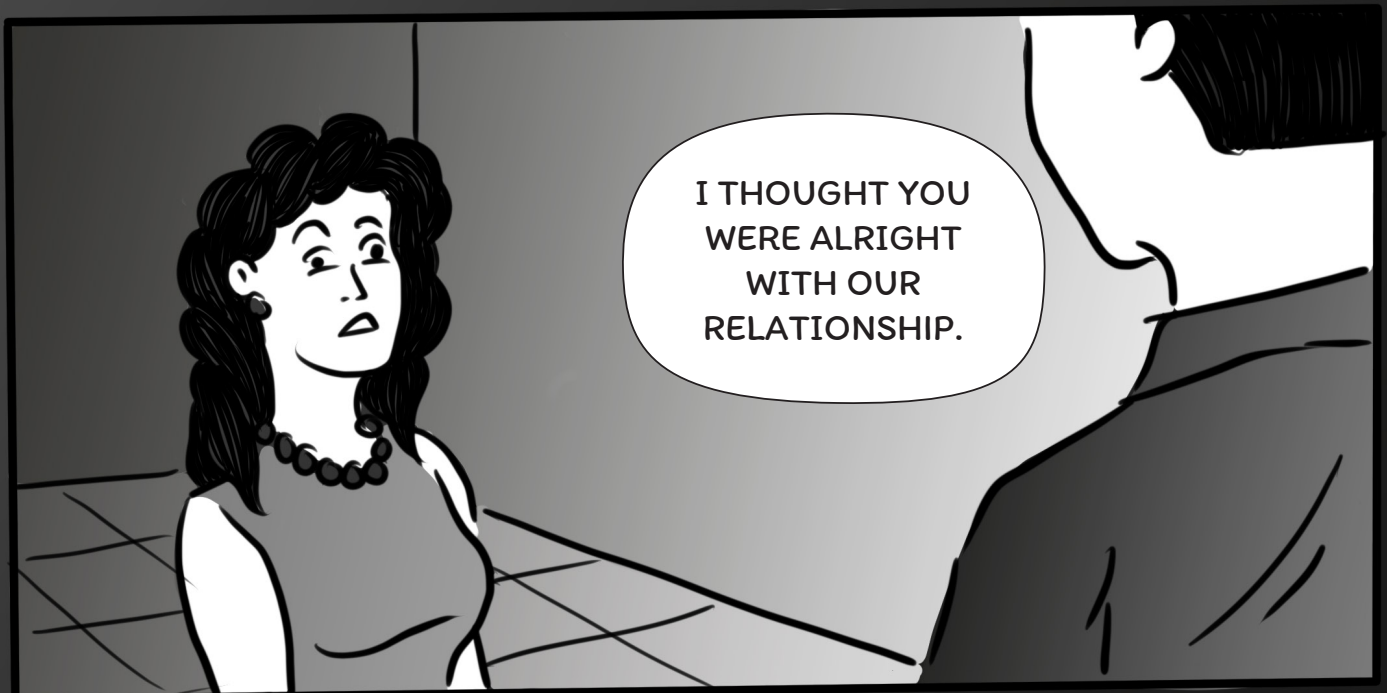


The following days she was never able to look straight at anyone.

The days following that went very painful, she felt everyone gaze piercing through her as she walked by the hallways of the office.

Everyone seemed to look at her in a gaze that judged her character  
But she was judging herself the whole time.

She felt distant.  
She felt ashamed of herself for getting herself in that situation.



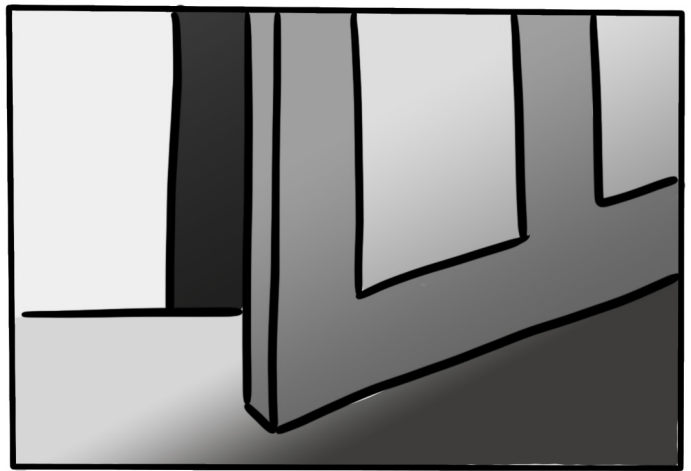
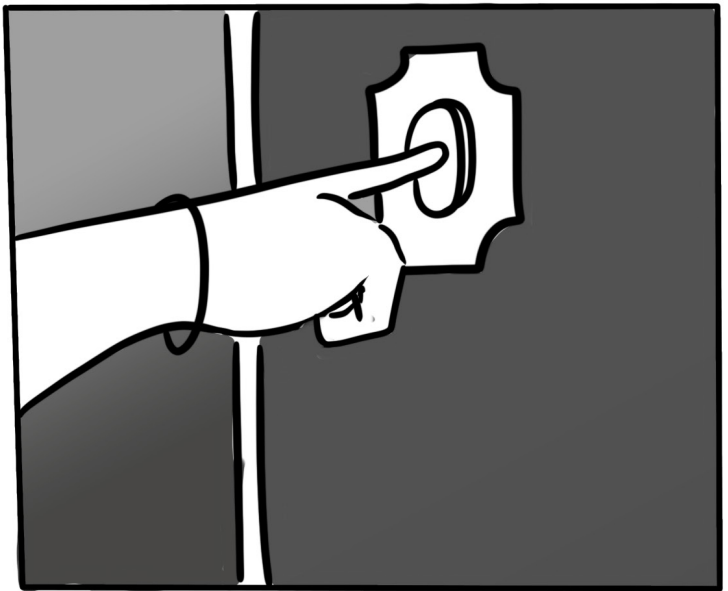





She was confused how the boss was so casual about the situation . this threw her off completely into a turmoil of self doubt.

Was I really asking for it?  
Was I really portraying myself as easy to get?  
Did I really call this on myself?



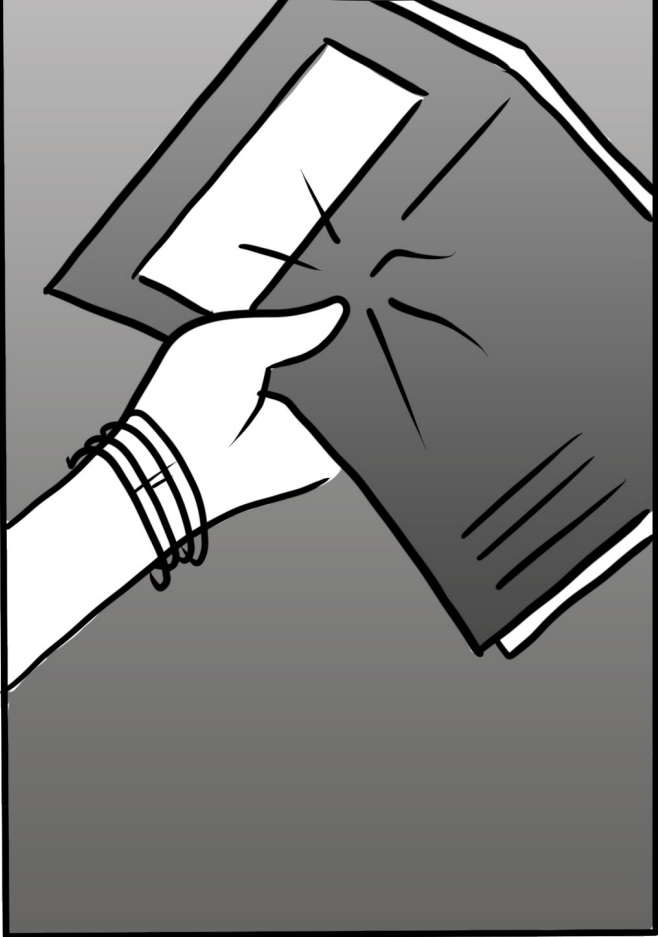


But it happened so, that i refused  
to look at my own life as being  
mistreated.  
I had accepted it how it was.



HOW DARE YOU COME TO  
MY HOUSE AND THREATEN  
MY MARRIAGE BY A STORY  
THAT HAS NO PROOF.

TAKE THE PAPERS AND  
LEAVE AND NEVER SPEAK TO  
ME ABOUT THIS.



I was angry, I wanted to protect my  
marriage, my family, my life.



YOU ARE RIGHT,  
I GOT NO PROOF,



She had already given up, but  
she had hope, hope that i might  
believe her side.

BUT WE ALWAYS  
HAVE A CHOICE.

EVEN YOU DO.

And then she left.

I felt her pain, but I refused to believe it, I understood her struggle, but I refused to relate to it.

I always told myself that what my husband does with me was his right, I chose to become the victim and I chose to protect the perpetrator.

I had lost my self-respect down this way.  
I had chosen to be the victim.

And I realized  
I have sheltered a monster  
that is now destroying other lives.  
I am equally responsible for it.

I told myself, This has to stop.


Then i saw her purse on the table and i  
called the office to ask someone to take it.  
And i came to know about the accident.






And if I hadn't come here on time I would have never understood that the stains of ink on my husbands shirt were tainted by the innocent girls he has been preying on.





SO WILL YOU BE HER  
VOICE?

AND MY EYES



Now the lives of not one but two innocent girls  
lie in the hands of her. She is the only hope.  
will she speak up?



## AFTERWORD

The story has been a very constructive part of my learning in IDC. It maps a journey of how i was able to develop my personal point of view of looking at grave problems developed.

I was able to understand how to handle sensitive content and was also confronted with challenges that come when devising a plot or a storyline that can keep the reader engaged.

I hope the readers like the story and understand the fact that the society is made up of us and our thoughts so lets keep a mind that is open and accepting towards these topics that affect humanity and help building a better future.





# HOPE

To find out who assaulted the woman she just met from her husband's workplace, the protagonist of the story rushes to the office where it took place. As she tries to piece together what happened, she happens to pick up conversations among the victim's colleagues and their point of view towards her character.

Unhappy with what she has witnessed she moves on to find more clues that can help her get a clear idea of who the attacker was. Coming across her own husband she notices something that makes her dig deeper into the mess she is already in. Only to find out that the assaulted woman wasn't the intended target, But was trying to protect someone from becoming the prey to the attackers intent.

Finally, with all the pieces together, the protagonist adds her piece to the story confirming who the attacker is. Hereby realizing that she's the sole link that can complete the connection between these victims and the attacker by becoming their voice and their only hope to attain justice. But will she do it? Is the decision she has to make.

