

I Write Fiction... So Sue Me

By Nayanna Chakraborty

The creativity inside me struggled to emerge but somehow I managed to keep it under wraps for fear of being ridiculed. First, it vented in the form of dramatics, then painting, and creating collages. Finally, the pressure was too much and it exploded in form of writing.

In the beginning, I found it hard to fill in forms for questionnaires and surveys, and I waited, doodling with my pen, wondering what I should write in the blank provided next to the word "profession." This hesitation was because my work had not been showcased in magazines that were commonly read. It was usually on websites and in the newsletters of fairly small publishing houses.

After a year of this awkwardness, I finally came to terms with my self-esteem and, with the encouragement of friends and family, I realized I was in the right profession.

One evening, I was attending an old friend's engagement party. I was mingling with the guests when someone asked me, "So, what do you do?"

"I'm a writer," I replied, my eyes gleaming with pride and a sense of accomplishment.

"Oh really!" said the man. "*Time Magazine? The Art World... Newsweek?*"

"No, I write fiction."

"Hmm..."

The conversation came to a screeching halt and the man seemed to have evaporated like the bubbles from a glass of cola not consumed in time. The humiliation was too much to handle and I left the gathering and loitered in the foyer, handing the valet my car keys. My stilettos clanked on the granite floor as I paced angrily, thinking that I should have given the man a piece of my mind, but my sensitive side let go of the opportunity.

"Now what's the point feeling sorry," I thought. "I let the moment pass."

"Excuse me," said a friendly voice. "Aren't you Annette's friend, Nina?"

I nodded.

"Why are you leaving so early? Oh, don't tell me. You have a busy day tomorrow... Meetings, presentations; I understand. I'm Jeremy, Annette's cousin."

I forced a smile. I really didn't want to talk about my day tomorrow because then I would have to tell him what I did for a living.

"So what do you do?" he asked.

"Too late," I thought.

"I don't do anything. I'm unemployed and I have no meetings or presentations. As a matter of fact I have nothing to do tomorrow."

The valet was just in time with my car and I drove away, watching Jeremy's expression in the rear mirror. The surprised look on his face made me realize that I was rude to him and made him an easy target of my frustrations. But I didn't care. He asked for it.

The next day, I decided that the time had come to remodel the living room. It was too cluttered with the wrong type of upholstered furniture. One thing led to another and I ended up painting and renovating the rest of the flat with the exception of my bedroom. I needed a clean place to sleep at night. My laptop stared at me every time I passed the bedroom to go to the storeroom. But I pretended that I didn't see it.

In two weeks, my apartment had a fresh, contemporary look. A place one could lounge undisturbed for hours. This serene relaxation came to a standstill after two days. I didn't know what to do next. I decided to rearrange my wardrobe and passed my laptop on the way. It had a thin film of dust coating its silver body. I had to clean it, at least to maintain the equipment.

The soft cloth smoothly captured all the dust and also started clearing the cobwebs that blocked my thoughts. I remembered the day I had bought the laptop, feeling lucky that in spite of the pouring rain, I made it and got the best deal. It felt so good that I finally owned one and for what? To be a writer. And not because a snooty man thinks that I am not good enough. It was time that I wrote what I felt and got it circulated to as many websites and newsgroups as I could. I believe that fiction writing is all about thrilling the inquisitive mind. With that, my fingers squeezed the soft keyboard and here it is as you read it.

Nayanna Chakraborty lives in Mumbai (Bombay) India. Travel, curiosity about the paranormal, fascination with adventure, sports, legends, and the mystical have influenced her writing.

As a versatile writer, many of her pieces have been published in fiction publications like 57 Story Lane, The Paranormal Investigator, and Miss Saphira's Strange and Mysterious Tales. The nonfiction ones are in Toowrite.com, SP News, My Life Webzine, Writing Village, The Travel Rag, The Applecart Magazine, Mosaic Minds, and The Flow Magazine. She was selected as one of the finalists in the 2004 short story competition for The Preservation Foundation, Inc.

Article Published by Absolute Write