

Cover page



About the author

Born with a creative mind and a curious heart, Mitisha has always enjoyed investing her time in learning something new and unique. She has always loved the idea of expanding her knowledge and perfecting herself in various fields. Gardening, sewing, reading, writing, playing the keyboard, art and craft are some of the many things that she enjoys doing during her free time. Books have always fascinated her. Be it facts or fantasy stories, Mitisha never turns down an opportunity to know more. Even before she could pronounce the words or comprehend what was written, she would stare at the pictures and illustrations on the pages of the books and would immensely enjoy when anyone would read to her. Now, she has no limits, her imagination knows no boundaries. Reading makes her happy.

She loves portraying her love and affection through her drawings. She loves writing her thoughts and opinions in the form of poetry. She loves telling her fantasies and adventures in her stories.



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Mithila's Adventure [Introduction]

"Mithila!" Mithila's mother shouted. Ma was a stout woman with long hair that fell to her knees. She was wearing an apron blotched with oil stains which covered her old, dirty sari. "Coming ma" said Mithila. Mithila was a little 9 year old girl who lived in Mumbai. She had plaited hair and with a sparkling pair of eyes, was gutsy and adventurous just like her mother. She was as thin as a toothpick!

Mithila rushed to the kitchen to see what had to be done. The kitchen was messy with utensils scattered all over. Ma said "Go to the bazaar beta and get some clay mud and come home right after that."

Mithila rushed to the door and stepped on the street. It was a hot day and sweat was trickling down Mithila's scorched neck. She intended to buy herself some cool refreshing lemonade. She crossed the slum where she lived and went running through different gullies [tiny streets] and finally reached the bazaar. The place was jostling with people. It was a happy scene filled with people adorned in clothes of every hue. There were big stalls, small stalls, and colorful stalls but there was one stall which lurked in a corner far from the others.



It looked so small that it seemed a human couldn't fit inside; and was painted pale green unlike the others which were bright and colorful. There was lots of dust settled on the stall. Cobwebs glistened in the sunlight like shiny silk. However it seemed that no animal or person was even nearby. Not even creepers could be seen twirling around it! A mist of gloom lingered over it almost shunning it from the other shops. It was visible that the stall was in ruins.

Mithila forgot her errands and walked towards the mysterious stall...

Mithila's Adventure [the curious wind]

As she walked towards the mysterious stall, her curiosity began to arouse and soon she couldn't wait any longer. "Mithila don't come here" said a scary and deep voice. Mithila turned to see nothing. Anyone would think that she would turn tail and run but brave Mithila stood her ground! "Is it a ghost or what" said Mithila teasingly and walked on "I know it's you Chintu, stop trying to scare me". Chintu was Mithila's friend and lived nearby. Chintu was hiding behind a tree [holding a megaphone from which he made the scary noise] and replied "ok, you got me." He then disappeared into the crowd.

Mithila finally reached the peculiar stall and ...**WOOSH!** A strong wind blew, throwing off her shopping bag on to the ground. As she went to pick up the bag, the sudden breeze stopped as quickly it had appeared! Something is not right, thought poor Mithila. The word 'right' made her remember why she came. She panicked and quickly bought the clay mud.

When she got home she elaborately explained the incident to her mother who listened with wonder. "This is so exciting I might die with excitement" said Mithila. "It is" confirmed her mother "But you can't venture out on your own, for now just make the model of Ganpati Bapa with the mud you have got. Ganesh Chaturti is coming around you know. Tomorrow we will go together to the bazaar."

Mithila nodded and set to work. She loved modeling clay and she was very good at it. She finished sculpting and painting the model and left it to dry. "Mithila, come eat your dinner." Her mother's voice rang through her ears. Like a flash of lightning, she was at the table guzzling up her food. After finishing, she took a quick glance at her model and got out her paint set and added a few finishing touches to the model of Ganeshji.

After a tiring day of hard work she trudged to her room and fell asleep the moment her head touched her pillow.

Mithila's Adventure [Ma comes to investigate]

Mithila woke up with a jump and sat on the bed. "Why is Ma looking at me so happily?" she thought. Suddenly she remembered the previous day's happenings and events. "Did you sleep well dear?" Ma asked shaking Mithila out of her thoughts. She quickly nodded, yes. As she began brushing her teeth and doing all the other things she started thinking about what would happen today. Ma and Mithila quickly stepped down the road. Alas! There had been a surprise shower last night and everything was soaked and slippery. So, Mithila and her mother got delayed while trying to cautiously walk on the slimy road.

The moment they reached they began to run as the bazaar's road had dried. "Ma I think that now we shall slow down" said Mithila as they neared the odd stall. "Okay" she replied. They walked at a brisk pace with silence. Yet, the same thing beheld them. Ma's duppata went flying through the air, only to again land on the ground. "That's exactly what happened with the bag yesterday!" exclaimed Mithila trying to keep her hair out of her face. When the wind died down they started to go towards the door. "The door looks like as if it had been broken and repaired" observed Ma. "Shhh, Ma you are talking at the top of your voice! Cried Mithila "You need to be softer".

As they approached they saw small notes scribbled on the brick walls like-

Call me Rian 236758686

Meet me at downtown shop Golu 6 pm

Bring the stuff Rajesh

And so on. They also saw some images drawn on the scruffy ground probably by some children years ago.

They pushed the door...

Mithila's Adventure [the secret note]

The door opened with a creak. Nothing. A big fat zero. Mithila was disappointed while her mother tried to comfort her. "This can't be" said Mithila. "Don't lose heart child" said Ma.

"But I really thought that there would be something scaring the presence of man"

"No child. Even I am disappointed. Can't you see?"

While they were talking, a small wheeze was heard. They stopped talking and frantically looked around. "What was that?" they said in union, followed by eerie silence.

They both looked in every corner they could imagine. Under the blue table, behind the blue chair and beneath a huge grey lumpy rug in the corner. Ma even tried to look behind a small old rectangular brown cupboard that almost touched the wall! The table was covered with a typewriter and heaps of papers which seemed unnecessary in a grocery stall. Ma observed this first and eventually told her daughter this fact. "Why didn't I notice that first" Mithila whispered enviously. But she didn't grumble for long as her mother was kind and loving.

Ma also noticed something written on the table. She told Mithila to read it out because it was very tiny. Mithila pulled out a shiny magnifying glass from her pocket and said with triumph "I knew that we would need it, So I brought it along."

She began to read the miniscule words...

Mithila's Adventure [what's this nonsense]

"THE XEV IS RLAGED IM IHE ELOWS OE BROWM" Mithila read.

"What is this nonsense." Ma said.

"It's all mashed up like khichdi" exclaimed Mithila.

"You're right"

"Wait....."

"Mithila what....."

"Ma wait! Please! Listen!" Said Mithila.

There was a long silence. A long ,long silence." I've got it." Said Mithila

"It is writtensosmallthatthewordsaresmudged." Her last 8 words tumbled out in rush and Ma couldn't understand even a word. "It... is... written... so... small... that... the... words... are... smudged." repeated Mithila slowly.

"I CAN'T BELIEVE IT, THIS....THIS IS EXACTLY LIKE THAT STORY." thundered Ma.

"what story??" asked Mithila.

"I will tell it to you tonight; we should go home right now" said Ma.

They went home and swiftly changed their clothes and went to the table and ate their food. At last they went to Mithila's room and switched off the light. Mithila lay down and covered herself with her chaadar while Ma sat on the edge of the bed. Ma started to speak...

"I remember my grandmother told me this story, let me tell it to you...."

Mithila's Adventure [Ma's story]

"Long ago lived a king called Bharam. He was loved by everyone high and low. The great ruler had one son, just one, whom he loved so dearly. Bharam's wife had died when their son was born. The prince was named Dhiram. He was an obedient boy who fulfilled all his father's requests. Now there was a huge bazaar in the city. The bazaar had one very famous stall. It was painted bright green and had a beaming red roof. There were many shoppers wanting the items in the stall so it was demolished and rebuilt in a corner far from the others so that the buyers could stand in a que. One day Bharam sent his servant to get some things from the bazaar. The servant went to that stall and never returned."

"The news spread like forest fire and thereafter no one went to that shop. The owner of the stall got irritated and left his stall and soon it was deserted. But he had forgotten that he had left all his money, which were old age coins which are very precious because there are very few left in the world right now, in the stall. So the stall remains waiting for someone to open it and discover it's surprises. Many centuries later this city was colonized by the British and named Bombay. Then when India was free we changed Bombay into Mumbai. Come on story over, now you sleep."



Soon Mithila slept...

Mithila's Adventure [solved!]

In the morning Mithila and Ma awoke and brushed their teeth and finished the morning errands. Then they set out to the bazaar again and reached the particular stall. As they stepped inside they heard the wheezing noise again. "Huh" said Mithila "we better not waste our time to look for it again." So they straight away went to the table. Mithila again took out the magnifying glass and tried to read it but still she couldn't read it. As she repeated the words over and over it started to make some sense to her. Mithila shouted "Ma! Ma! I can understand some of the words. Not IHE but THE ,not RLAGED but PLACED, not BROWM but BROWN! The words are just smudged!" Ma said "Oh yes! Now we have to figure out the rest of the words." They sat and thought and thought and sat. At last they arrived with the message :- **THE KEY IS PLACED IN THE FLOWS OF BROWN.**

"Yes we did it! But what is brown here?" they cried. "Only the cupboard is brown here. But the key must be of the cupboard itself" said Ma. Mithila said "Ma I might have an idea of where it is." And without saying another word she picked up a broom and dusted the grey rug. After a while the rug turned brown. "I am so proud of you, I never would have thought that it was covered in dust. I had just assumed that grey was its actual colour" said Ma. Ma cut up a slit in the rug (she knew that the key was there because of the rugs lumpiness) and fished out the key.



They both silently turned the key in the lock of the cupboard...

Mithila's Adventure [I can't wait, I just can't wait]

The doors swung open. Mithila felt a surge of excitement tingling inside her. A long and thin tunnel was in front of them. "Wow, a huge underground tunnel. Let's go. I want to go." pleaded Mithila. Ma found herself to be forced to go in. They crawled on their knees for what seemed like hours to Mithila. Crawl crawl....whoa! They both found themselves in what looked like a massive underground cave! It was very dark inside and Ma's legs were aching, so they decided to sit down for a while.

As Mithila's sharp eyes grew accustomed to the dark, Ma's knees felt better. They both stood up quickly. What they saw was astonishing. "Old, hundreds of scrolls! Oh my, we should read them! They cried at the same time (they were mother & daughter after all!). "Wait" said Ma suddenly, "we should do this properly. We will return tomorrow with torches".

"Oh ! No need for that" said Mithila as she slyly pulled out a torch from her coat. Now it was Ma's turn to smile. She told Mithila that she had a clever mind. They used the torch to read the scripts but.. Lo... they couldn't read a single word! "We will return tomorrow with the lingual experts." And they did just that.

The next day they brought the language translators and they informed Mithila and Ma that it was probably a very old language which was now rediscovered. The next few days were very busy indeed, there was lots of research going on. Then it was confirmed that a historical language had been rediscovered. The news spread in the entire country and Mithila and Ma became great heroes of India.

"I can't wait, I just can't wait for my next adventure" said Mithila.



Blurb

Curious Mithila discovers a lonely stall away from the rest of the Bazaar. Ma and Mithila go in to find an underground tunnel. They follow the tunnel and... what's going to happen next!

