

The Deadly Date!

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This is a short story dedicated to the senior citizens suffering from post retirement blues. A space that the younger lot can only talk about and not relate to for obvious reasons, but an effort can always be made to understand their state of mind. This is just an effort to do that...

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Mr Bhabesh Kundu had been a successful civil engineer with the Dastoor Group. Retired around four months back, Mr Kundu was getting onto everyone's nerves at home. Right from the maid, Shondhya, his son Sudipto and his daughter in law, Jaya. They did not seem to understand how to tackle the "what to do the whole day" problem of a sixty year old man. By the time he would finish his bath and pooja in the morning, it would be time for his son and daughter in law to disperse for work, leaving him at home with the television, the telephone and lots of free time. Sudipto, unable to see his baba glum for so long was quite depressed. One day in office seeing Jotin babu play *free cell* on the computer, he decided to get home a second hand PC. Sudipto was quite thrilled with his own idea, so was Jaya. Mr Kundu though was not very excited. He had a look at it but did not think it could do much to solve his problem of total boredom. Initially inhibited to explore the piece, the computer gradually grew on him like wild fungus. From morning to evening, Kundu senior was shuttling between solitaire, pinball and other computer games.

Typing had never been so much fun. Most things happened at the press of a button, *er* key. Earlier, on his office Remington machine, a lot of force was required to type out each letter and a lot of white ink was used to hide typing errors!! Thus Mr Kundu started writing with extra interest. He would type out anything and everything that would come to his mind. He felt on top of the world when he created his email id bhabeshkundu@hotmail.com all small letters and no gaps haan, he would tell all his friends. But apart from all this, what really excited him was the surfing bit. What an apt word thought Kundu to himself. The all new sensibility that engulfed his existence thanks to the computer brought a lot of happiness to him and a lot of misery to others, namely his friends, his son and his daughter in law. He had no time for them, so immersed was he in his new found love, till one day!

!while surfing, he came across a new site called know your life dot com which predicted one's time and day of death. An inquisitive Kundu fed in his birth details and clicked the enter button! and there it was. Five days later at 5:30 pm sharp. Mr Bhabesh Kundu was just five days away from his death!!!!

Somewhere at the back of his mind, he knew that these things were not to be taken seriously but he could not help thinking that he had just a few days more on earth! The countdown had already begun, he started feeling giddy at times, showed symptoms of heart trouble, knee ache and what not though he did not discuss all this with anyone. The enthusiasm in surfing had declined considerably without any conscious effort involved in doing so. Surfing was slowly replaced by writing notes on what he felt about life, his childhood, the day his wife, Poornima, died, one day in the month of Aashaad, etc., reading Bengali literature, discussing Marxist ideology with his daughter in law and spending time with his building mates. Time was flying by. On the fourth day morning, he decided to visit the Kalighat temple and spent hours in the premises of the same. On the fifth day, a couple of hours away from death, Mr Kundu was at peace with himself. His mind was suddenly filled with flashes of bygone memories blurred by the tears in his eyes as he shut them to rest. It was around seven in the evening when everyone was busy discussing Sachin's batting over tea and hot pakodas that Kundu realized that it was an hour and a half past his doom time. He immediately checked the site again and found the date deferred by a month. He smiled to himself and spent a good two hours surfing again! That night Kundu senior laughed like he never had and the glint in his eyes expressed the satisfaction and joy of logging onto life again!

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