

Interactive Novel Writing Contest
BRANCH 2
(Science Fiction)

PROMPT 1

Charu was informed her grandmother was seriously ill. It has been six months since Charu started her studies at NYU Law School, which she had joined amidst many refusals and objections.

She took the immediate next flight from New York to her native place Fort Kochi and landed at Cochin International Airport.

Charu never liked her life at Fort Kochi. The old home, the ancient traditions and the old lifestyle. She lost her mother when she was 12 and it was her grandmother who raised her. Her father, Mr. Mani Oomen, was a carpet exporter. He has two stores at Fort Kochi and one at Ernakulam. When Charu disclosed her interest to study law, he refused her decision outright. And now she is going back to the same place. Her mind was full of thoughts and she was in no mood to think about anything else except her return date from India.

From the airport, she took a self-driven taxi and drove to Fort Kochi, 20 k.m. away from the airport. It was 7 p.m. and the lights were all lit. She directly went to her grandmother's room and saw her, there were many machines attached to her. There was a nurse beside grandmother's bed. Charu went to her room and slept soon, as she was exhausted.

The next morning, she took a stroll to David Hall Road. The weather was breezy and the birds were chirping good. On David Hall Road, she saw the library open. There was a book store attached to the library.

'Old books for sale. Rs. 250 per KG,' a board declared before the gate. She grinned. An avid reader that she was and since had nothing to do, she went inside the store. She picked seven books, paid for them at the counter and headed home.

The maid gave her a cup of coffee. Sipping her coffee, she started checking the books. The fifth book's cover intrigued her. It was a beautiful abstract painting of a woman with no eyes but had tears, nose and lips.

She skimmed through the pages. At page 67 there was a polaroid photograph of an old villa. She took out the photo and examined it. On its backside there was an alpha-numeric code written with a small map that showed directions to the villa. The code read: MV02FK09. The map had a starting point at 'Hotel AB***' and extended till the villa. The end point was a drawing of the villa that read 'Home.'

The photograph created a bug in Charu's mind. She was thrilled.

Please pick up any question to write your story.

1. Who is Sheryl Varghese?
2. Does she know about this photograph?
3. Will she be able to crack the code?
4. Could she be still alive?

PROMPT 2

There was a swirl of thoughts going around in Charu's mind – the sword, Sheryl wishing for a mountain and more importantly her being the spitting image of Sheryl. She wanted to find out more and thus went back to Uncle Vincent's house but she was in for disappointment. Ruth, the son of the caretaker Martha, told her that Uncle Vincent has left suddenly for Egypt.

Charu was surprised as he did not tell her anything about going to Egypt when she last met him. She then asked for his contact details in Egypt and it was in for Ruth to be surprised now at the urgency of Charu to meet Uncle Vincent. He asked Charu to take a seat and went in to call his mother Martha.

The moment Martha came in and saw Charu, she started shrieking. She called Charu as "Sherry" again and again and fainted. A frightened Charu rushed back home with more questions than answers in her mind.

Questions:

1. Why did Martha shriek hysterically when she saw Charu?
2. What if Vincent Uncle did not go to Egypt?
3. What if the sword vanished from the museum?

PROMPT 3

Recap:

*Charu comes to India from New York to visit her ailing grandmother. She buys some books. In one book, on page 67 there is a polaroid photograph of an old villa. On its backside there is an alphanumeric code written with a small map that showed directions to the villa. The code read: MV02FK09. The map had a starting point at 'Hotel AB***' and extended till the villa. The end point was a drawing of the villa that read 'Home.'*

In her sleep, she hears voices calling her as Sheryl. She asks the 85-year-old Vincent Uncle who tells that Sheryl Verghese had wanted to have a mountain named after her maiden family name. Her husband Anthony Delsworth could not do that, so he built a magnificent hotel and named it Mount Verghese. Their descendants sold the hotel. It was converted to a mall called The City Mall. The destination called Home on the map is now a museum. In the museum, Charu reads a book in which there is a chapter titled Hotel Mount Verghese. The details shake her up. Charu realises she is a dead ringer for Sheryl Varghese. In one photo, in Anthony's hand there is a sword on which it was engraved MV02FK09. She then heard the voice again in her head 'Welcome Home, Sheryl Verghese.'

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Rules:

- Please use the story [The Journey Within](#) as the base and take the story forward.
- Other rules as given for previous prompt.

PROMPT 4

Base story: *Charu and Plethora of Uncertainties* by Siva Aravindan

URL:

<https://storymirror.com/read/english/story/charu-and-plethora-of-uncertainties/a4yo2s6k>

Base Story Summary & Prompt

Before: At Kochi..

After having looked out at the blueprints she got from Yuvaan, the blueprints gave her a clue about an entrance that was near the city mall. She knew a plumber friend of her father who once said on his visit to their house that he had taken up the plumbing contract for the city mall and had dropped out due to uncertain circumstances. She made out a plan to have a chat with him.

She got to know that the place she was searching on the map was more like a tunnel that was barricaded on the other end. She tried to reach out to Yuvaan to have him briefed about the recent updates but he didn't pick the call. Yuvaan grew up as an orphan and was two years elder to her and stayed all alone by himself in his uncle's house who has settled abroad.

Before: At Egypt:

Vincent sir... the voice came from the adjacent lab. "We have successfully split the atoms and generated the signature radiations. Waiting for your authentication sir", his assistant called out. Slowly he moved from his place to the secure chamber where he had Anthony's sword. He inserted the sword into the activation chamber and waited. Nothing happened... He tried once again nothing... He observed the sword with his powerful microscope and to his astonishment it was a replica. The sapphire blue gloss was not visible rather it had a bronze shade on closer observation.....

Next day...

Three buildings adjacent to her house was Yuvaan's house. Charu couldn't understand what was happening. Police vehicle was stationed outside and the place was crowded with people from the neighbourhood. A few reporters were busy taking snaps and doing a video coverage of the surrounding. She tried to move past the crowd to have a look at what was happening. The hall was well lit but had red stains of blood all over the floor and at a distance she saw Yuvaan's body lying on the floor. She stood there motionless with overwhelming grief and shock. She tried to move past to have one last look but the police blocked her way. Soon Charu's father came and held her back from going inside, consoling her. She let out silent whimpers in pain and grief. Soon the paramedics carried his body for autopsy.

Present...

Before dying, Yuvaan couriers Charu a few papers and a key with the details on how to reach a place where he had kept a box. Further, he had instructed them to use the key to open it and cautioned her to be on the alert as any time EVIL will approach her. She went again the text on the letter and she wondered what it really meant.

The man who preferred to be called EVIL was busy watching her from the opposite balcony of the mansion. He smiled to himself and he went inside to have a look at the sword in hand. "You are really beautiful", he exclaimed and kissed the sword gently.

Through the thicket of trees, she trampled through a dusty web of twisted and gnarled branches to reach a clearing in the middle. There it lay on the ground, the mysterious box. She took out the blood-stained key...She inserted the key and rotated it clockwise. Clank. Clank... It was about to open as she saw the shadows from behind. She turned back cautiously...

Questions:

1. Who are the attackers?
2. Why is Uncle Vincent trying to split the atoms to generate radiation?

PROMPT 5

Base story: *The Gateway* by kartik m

URL:

<https://storymirror.com/read/english/story/the-gateway/tcw7b52h>

Vincent is working on electromagnetic waves which opens a portal to a wormhole.

The lake bed at Mount Varghese has the same magnetic properties as that of Bermuda Triangle.

There were three pieces to opening the portal: The lake with its lodestone-laden lake bed, the radiation that triggered the electromagnetic waves to power up the wormhole, and the mystical sword to activate the doorway that enabled access to the other dimension. He had everything in his grasp except the sword.

The electromagnetic waves would open the portal between the two worlds- the conscious and the unconscious one that existed even after one died. He had held on to the "Einstein-Rosen bridges" or the "wormhole theory" of bridges existing between two points in the fabric of time that could allow beings to travel from one dimension to the other seamlessly. After years of painstaking research, he had realized that a tremendous amount of energy created from powerful electromagnetic waves and radiation would be required to open the wormhole.

(Please do not repeat the base story in your submission).

Prompt Questions

1. Who are the attackers and what does EVIL mean?
(EVIL was introduced in the story *Charu and Plethora of Uncertainties*)
2. Where is the original sword?
(Vincent needs it to open the portal)

PROMPT 6

Base story: *The Sword in Hand But Vincent on Remand* by Deendayalan N

<https://storymirror.com/read/english/story/the-sword-in-hand-but-vincent-on-remand/jfam80k0>

This base story answers the previous prompt's question: Where is the sword? (Vincent needs it to open the portal).

Vincent Uncle heard Charu in his dream: "An 'Eureka' call for you!" He saw a big hospital; one bed comes near him and Charu is on it. She asked, "Uncle I will sleep in your sleep. Can I?"

Charu superimposed herself on him and started sleeping deeply. She travelled at very high speed with somebody driving the mode of travel, Charu unsure who it was.

Charu saw 'SWORD - MV02FK09' at a cemetery and an inscribed clue. She woke up trembling, but shouting "Eureka, Vincent Uncle. Eureka."

In Egypt, Vincent got the same clue in his dream and ordered his assistants to decode it. They figure out that 'The Ethnic Jungle Monsters' rob and hide historically popular treasures and monuments. The original sword was with these robbers.

Vincent planned to go to the 'wormhole entry' of Amazon's Forest. From there, he would shadow the gang via The Point of Tigers, The Point of Hell to reach the 'Monster Bay' which has the 'Collection Godown.' After the gang chants the mantra, Vincent would also chant it, enter the godown and search for the sword. If he does not return within seven days of his departure, his team of Evan, Lista, Inker and Lara will come to rescue him.

Uncle Vincent executed his plan, found the sword and came out of the warehouse (godown). He is surrounded by killer members of the 'The Ethnic Jungle Monsters'.

Uncle Vincent knew the procedures of the gang. They will definitely sacrifice him to their goddess on the seventh day. Uncle Vincent has no other alternative, but to wait for the four Evan, Vista, Inker and Lara!

Note: Please read all previous branch 2 prompts to maintain continuity.

Questions

1. How did Uncle Vincent's atom-splitting experiment cause the COVID pandemic? How is the experiment related to Yuvaan's death?
2. How will EVIL rescue uncle Vincent? How will the antidote be discovered?

PROMPT 7

The wormhole is the means through which Egypt, Fort Kochi and various other realms in space and time are connected. Sheryl has travelled in time as Charu and come to the present time through the wormhole. Sheryl now has the identity of Charu, but Uncle Vincent controls Charu, due to which she has no past memory of herself as Sheryl.

The reason for Sheryl's time travel is to stop the virus apocalypse. The same ancient virus has been lying dormant for many years and is now activated by Uncle Vincent's experiment. The virus can be contained only through the code that Charu has with her. And the sword engraved with the code is the key to contain the virus. Already the virus has spread to several countries and can soon lead to an apocalypse.

Yuvaan is also one of the victims of the virus. Apparently, he was killed by gunshots on the very day Charu arrived in India, but he was also injected with the virus. The day Charu arrived in India, Uncle Vincent and his EVIL members were still in India. Yuvaan came to know about Vincent controlling Charu. Vincent told his EVIL members that he was controlling Charu because she was Sheryl, who has come to prevent the apocalypse. Vincent got Yuvaan killed as Yuvaan threatened that he would reveal everything to Charu.

[Note: Please read all previous branch 2 prompts to maintain continuity].

Questions

1. How will the sword help to contain the virus?
2. What is the feud between Sheryl and Vincent? What is Sheryl's motive to save the earth?

PROMPT 8

Charu wakes up from the dream. She takes a look at the blueprints sent by Yuvaan before he died and finds the cemetery that she saw in her dreams. She is amused that the cemetery is at the other end of the lakebed. The lakebed keeps popping up at every angle of her investigation. So, she decides to explore the cemetery and the lake.

In Egypt, EVIL put up a fight against the 'Ethnic Jungle Monsters' and rescue uncle Vincent at the nick of time - right before he is about to be sacrificed.

Being equipped with the sword now, Uncle Vincent reaches his lab and inserts the sword into the slot. Swoosh... the portal to the wormhole opens and he reaches the lake bed in Fort Kochi to kill Charu.

At a corner of the cemetery, Charu finds a mysterious entrance. She goes in the long dark tunnel that leads her to a brilliantly lit room concealed behind an old wooden door. She finds the sword - MV02FK09 inserted into a slot beside a magnetic hose dangling down. She immediately places the dangling magnetic hose on her head and is transported into the passage which connects two time periods.

Charu learns that she is the ancient Egyptian queen, Berenice, whose ambition is to stop pandemic apocalypses. For this purpose, Berenice time travels to the future. In her previous time travel, she was Sheryl to stop the Spanish Flu and now she is Charu to stop the Corona virus.

Vincent is Queen Berenice's brother, Amon, who believed that he is the rightful heir to the throne. He discovers that Berenice is queer and has a secret lover, Nefret, the commander of her army. The queen's lesbian relationship and his exile from the kingdom by his father for his evil deeds strengthen Amon's intent to kill Berenice more than ever. Berenice discovers her brother's evil intentions.

Anibus, her trusted priest and healer / alchemist prepared a concoction that was instrumental in safeguarding her kingdom against deadly viruses. But Anibus predicted that there would be episodes of virus attacks in the future.

Anibus had time travelled as Yuvaan. Because of this, Vincent killed Yuvaan so that he could never team up with Charu in the current time.

Charu comes out of the wormhole portal with all the new information.

Note – this is a science-fiction branch, hence please take care not to include fantasy elements. If you want to write a fantasy story, please use branch 3 prompt.

Questions:

1. How will Charu retrieve the antidote, since Anibus/Yuvaan is dead?
2. How will Vincent stop Charu?