

**Impact Factor: 6.017**

**ISSN: 2278-9529**



# **GALAXY**

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal  
Peer-Reviewed e-Journal



**Vol.14, Issue- 3 April 2025**



**14 Years of Open Access**



Editor-In-Chief: Dr. Vishwanath Bite  
Managing Editor: Dr. Madhuri Bite

[www.galaxyimrj.com](http://www.galaxyimrj.com)

About Us: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/about-us/>

Archive: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/archive/>

Contact Us: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/contact-us/>

Editorial Board: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/editorial-board/>

Submission: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/submission/>

FAQ: <http://www.galaxyimrj.com/faq/>



## **The Bus Seat**

**Dr Neha**

"That's my window seat,"

I was badly exhausted, beyond endurance actually. I had just landed Ranchi after a week-long fatiguing journey that had actually ended in failure. I had to go to Hazaribagh that was almost two hundred kilometers away by bus. A week ago it had started with all enthusiasm and energy. I had an interview in Himachal Pradesh through Public Service Commission Exams so my journey was from Jharkhand to HP via Delhi. The journey started with all the enthusiasm and thrill. In Delhi, I was to meet my intended, but that's another story—"A Modern Marriage Proposal." Do read it to understand my mental exhaustion. Anyways, I was on my way back now, feeling extremely fatigued both mentally and physically.

It was office hours when I landed at Ranchi Airport. To avoid traffic, I opted for a bike service rather than a taxi. I prefer traveling light, with as little luggage as possible, so any mode of conveyance easily suits me.

I had to hustle for half an hour to figure out the biker's location. All I wanted was to reach home as soon as possible. The delay was already getting on my nerves. Finally, when I found him, I saw in him a middle-class man like me, trying his best to make ends meet with the job he could do. That realization calmed me down.

As soon as he arrived, he stated that the fare would be double and that he wouldn't follow company norms, as they set unmanageably low charges, which weren't sustainable for him. Since I didn't want to waste any more time, I agreed to his terms, and the hour-long journey from the airport to the bus stop began.

More than people themselves, it's their stories that attract me. After all, what are we but stories—identical in some ways yet so different in others? I collect stories from all those I encounter—co-passengers who catch my attention, drivers, fellow travellers, pedestrians, sellers, and even beggars. They all fill tiny fragments of the world, and the world attracts me immensely.



My conversation with the biker began smoothly. People usually share their basic details with me willingly, providing enough of a preface to start a deeper exchange. I requested him to stop at a juice center. We had juice, though he politely declined to have any, fearing that he might have to pay for it or that I might reduce his fare later. It was a simple, understandable business apprehension.

By this time, he felt comfortable enough, and his stories began to flow, one after another. He was a natural storyteller.

There's a lot of conning these days, ma'am. Just last week, I rode a woman home. The fare was around five hundred. When we reached the destination, she told me her phone was off, so she couldn't pay me online, and she didn't have cash either. She said her home was nearby and that she'd fetch my fare in cash if I waited.

Ma'am, I waited there in the dark for more than half an hour. Nobody came. Her phone was already off. I even complained to the company, but nothing came of it. She told them she never boarded.

Yes, the fault was mine. My fault, madam. When we reached the destination, she told me her phone had just gone off. You know, just after booking, we always talk on a call to confirm the location, and she had even described her dress color so I could recognize her. I didn't question how her phone could have switched off at that very instant. But it's destiny—what's written is written.

Then he shared other stories—his own and those of other bikers who had been conned by passengers. I felt bad for them, and for the general lack of humanity and conscience. His story continued.

I'm a family man, ma'am. No matter how late it gets, I never eat alone outside. I always have my breakfast and dinner with my wife. After all, what does she have in life except her children and my company? She is a devoted mother and wife.

By the time I reach home, the children are usually asleep. They go to school. I'm sending them to a private school—not like my education in a government school. My wife and I pray every day to God to give them the sense to study well and do good in life.



As I told you, I never stay out too late. But once in a while, when a girl books a ride very late and requests me a lot to drop her, I feel a social obligation. I have a sister too, after all. But now, I've given up on that as well. Life is more important than social responsibility, isn't it, ma'am?

I affirmed. And then, he began his story.

A few days back, ma'am, it was eleven at night. I had already received a few calls from my wife. She starts getting impatient after ten. She wants me back by then, but late-night passengers pay extra, ma'am. What am I working for? Money. It pays the bills, so when I get the chance to earn it, I ask myself—what can I bear: a lack of money or my wife's transient anger? I choose the second. After all, I have to pay the bills. I never bring money matters to my wife. Why let her suffer?

It was almost eleven, ma'am, when I got the booking. I had almost declined, but there was such intense imploration in her voice that I couldn't refuse. Besides, she wanted to go to Raikheda. You know Raikheda?

I shook my head.

"It's on the outskirts of the city," he continued.

When she mentioned that her mother was ill and she had to reach home, I felt obliged to go. I had to pick her up from Jarudih. You probably don't know this place either, ma'am. Ranchi used to be a small city, but ever since Jharkhand became a separate state and Ranchi was made its capital, it has spread its wings like anything. The distance between Jarudih and Raikheda is almost forty kilometers.

She described her location and how I could recognize her by her dress. When I reached, I noticed her tear-stained face. She gave me the travel code, and we started. It was half past eleven by the time I picked her up. I handed her the helmet, but she insisted she didn't want to wear it.

Since it was late at night, and there was little chance of traffic police monitoring the roads, and considering her emotional state, I didn't force her either.



She thanked me for being considerate and talked about her mother's ill health. Initially, people talk continuously, you know, ma'am. But after a while, when topics run out, conversations slow down—just a remark here and there. So, when she went silent, I didn't notice.

Almost fifteen or twenty minutes later, I felt something strange. I felt no weight behind me. When someone is sitting behind you, there's always a weight. My first thought was—had I dropped her somewhere? But then, there would've been a thud. She would've screamed.

I didn't stop riding, ma'am, but I was sweating like anything. Scared. It was midnight. Without stopping, I took a U-turn and rode all the way back. I was sure—nobody was behind me. I retraced my path, hoping to see if she had fallen somewhere. All the while, I was chanting the *Hanuman Chalisa* and praying to Lord Hanuman. I strongly believe He saved me that night.

Strangely, when I reached the spot where I had picked her up, I saw a girl standing there. Same dress. But this time, she was with a boy. Different face.

As soon as I stopped, she asked if I was from the bike-ride service and started scolding me profusely. Said she had been waiting for ten minutes and had called me several times. I checked my phone—there was no call. My phone was on ring. How come I didn't hear anything?

It had all happened in the last nine minutes.

I asked her if any other girl had been waiting there earlier. She said no. By that time, her booked car arrived, and she left.

Ma'am, I was scared to my bones, unable to understand anything. I left for home immediately. By the time I reached, I had a high fever. I was shivering, chattering to the bones.

The next day, I told my wife everything, and we went straight to the temple.

"Ma'am, what do you think? Who was she?"

"Your lover from the last birth," I teased. "Nice story," I added.



"Don't you believe in supernatural things and powers?"

I hesitated. "I'm not sure," I said, trying to sound less dismissive.

By then, I had reached my destination. I paid him, and we parted ways.

I went to the bus booking center and bought myself a window seat in the second row—seat number 3. Seat number 1 was a window seat, 2 was the aisle seat beside it. In the next row, 3 was the window seat, and 4 was the aisle, and so on.

I was already exhausted. When I boarded the bus, I checked seat number 3 and sat down.

As other passengers filled in, a family arrived—a couple with two daughters. The first few seats were reserved for women, so they had managed to get three seats in the front and one toward the back. As soon as they entered, the two young girls quickly took seats 1 and 2.

Then, the wife turned to her husband and began scolding him. She had specifically asked for a window seat for herself. I had my eyes closed, trying to rest, but I was listening to their conversation.

A moment later, the wife tapped my shoulder.

"That's my window seat," she said.

I opened my eyes and replied, "No, this is seat number 3. It's mine."

She insisted, saying seat number 3 was indeed mine—but it wasn't a window seat.

Seat numbers were written on the back of the seats, so I checked. To my shock, she was right. My seat wasn't by the window.

At first, I thought I had made a mistake, so I quietly shifted. But as I moved, I noticed the husband glaring at his wife. His words still echo in my mind:

"You didn't have to do that."

She just grinned.



It was then that I remembered my conversation at the ticket counter—how I had specifically asked for a window seat, how I had checked before sitting down.

The bus had started moving. The woman now was travelling beside me.