

Happy Reading

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Poor
Indian
Graduate
Students



Anish Sadanandan

*An average Indian graduate student's experiences
with girls, girls and something
called a Masters degree....worth..nothing!*

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Introduction

I think the most apt way of beginning this book is by telling you why it is named P.I.G.S. I remember the time when my parents were persuading my brother to stay on in India and not go to the USA for his Masters. My dad tried every trick in the book, but I thought the most outrageous one was when he said, "Do you know what they call Indian graduate students in the US? They call them P.I.G.S., Poor Indian Graduate Students." At the time, I couldn't stop laughing. I mean you are talking about a country that has never discriminated based on race, religion, or color. A country where George Bush Jr. was president for 8 long years, where the winner of a championship game between any two American teams is called "World Champions", where the ground floor is called the first floor though it is at ground level. They are the most normal people around; at least that is what I thought.

Instead of starting off straight with my graduate life, I would like to delve a bit into my past so that you know why I am the douchebag that I am now. My name is Anish Sadanandan. I did my B.E. in Production Engineering from Mumbai University, and just graduated with an M.S. in Engineering Management. The more intricate details you will learn during the course of this book. Now, to tell you a bit

about my wonderful life.....

The wonder years

There are a lot of things I have my parents to thank for. To begin with, I am thankful that though being from South India, Kerala to be precise, they decided to move to Mumbai and raise my brother Ashish and me there. Don't get me wrong. I am very proud to be a Keralite, but if I were to have been born and raised there, I would now have a mustache (considered sexy down there), a nice big rounded belly (apparently the more the surface area the better), and a side parting hairstyle with enough oil on it to cook food for the entire Vatican City. During my undergraduate years, I actually put on a lot of weight and was around 100 kgs, and during this healthiest point of my life, we visited my relatives in Kerala. Undoubtedly, I was the hottest property down south after gaining that much weight. My aunts said I had never looked better, and that I would get the most beautiful girls there for marriage. Though that thought made me think twice before shedding some kilos, I did manage to lose around 20 kgs before our next trip to God's Own Country the following year, but this time around I was destined to only get proposals from the bottom of the pile. Health is wealth takes a back seat here to the heavier the sexier evidently.

Another thing I should thank my parents for is putting me in an English medium school. India has about 29 spoken languages, with each language being the medium of instruction in schools. In Mumbai, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati and English medium schools are the forerunners, and an English medium school was what my folks thought would be the best for us. I personally believe it was a good decision because today I am able to converse well with people from different countries in English without any hassle apart from the accent, which can be tough to understand at times. BUT in the end my parents are human too, and to err is human and to forgive is divine. However, I will never forgive them for putting me in a Sikh school. See, once upon a time, a very important person to the Sikhs was kidnapped. To rescue him, the Sikhs made a plan to attack at midnight. At the stroke of midnight, they yelled out "*bole so nihal, sat sri akal*" and rescued their leader by absolutely demolishing the kidnappers*. However, from that day onwards, people believed that Sikhs completely lose it at midnight. Over the years, this time changed from 12am to 12pm, I suppose because kids couldn't tease other kids at midnight, they thought noon would be a better option. Also, going to Guru Harkrishan High School meant that every student of that school went

bonkers at noon, not just the Sikh students, everyone! So you can imagine the amount of ridicule I had to face from friends outside of school.

In India, as everyone knows, arranged marriage within castes is a prominent ritual. So all these little Sikh kids running around with their small turbans knew they were going to get some hot women as wives. As a result of this knowledge, if any kid from a different caste would try to flirt with any of these gorgeous women, these little turban wearing punks would give them a smug smile which pretty much said, "Try all you want but in the end one of us is going to tap that". It was like keep a box full of candy in front of a child, and then telling him it was forbidden. This made us non-Sikhs really aggravated and we did what we could do best, make more fun of those pompous pricks.

Like every other school, we had nicknames for most of the teachers as well. Hindi teacher who slept through most of the class was *sleeping beauty*, science teacher who had a tendency to let one rip once in a while was *gas cylinder*, another Hindi teacher who kind of resembled a bulldog, well she was *bulldog* of course, teacher named Mr. De Gama was *Vasco De Gama*, and so on and so forth. We had some weird teachers too. Apart from *sleeping beauty* and *gas cylinder*, we had a

geography teacher who would call every guy “poppy” for some reason. I don't know what exactly it meant, maybe we knew we would be smoking some derivatives of poppy seeds some time in our lives, or maybe he just loved poppy seeds so much that he called all the kids in his class poppy. Now that I think about it, he reminds me a lot of Mr. Garrison from South Park. This teacher even used to run his hands on the backs of his favorite male students in a circular motion. Now I know what you must be thinking, Mr. Garrison, running hands on the back of young boys, I used to think on those lines too but can you imagine my surprise when he got married? It was definitely a big shocker. In the end, I guess he was just a very friendly teacher who looked after his best students.

I am sure a lot of you might be feeling disappointed right now, considering that the geography teacher didn't turn out to be a pervert, and it is always fun to read about one. Well I wouldn't want to disappoint you. I have some personal experiences on those fronts too. I played field hockey as a goalkeeper, a very bad goalie at that. I really don't even want to start on the margins with which we lost most of our games. One day when I was changing, the coach comes into the room, and suddenly tells me to wear an abdomen guard (a cup) to protect my

“goods”. This seems like a normal thing of course but he was holding my crotch the whole time while saying this! If there are any shrinks reading this, they might try to analyze my character based on this, but you can be rest assured that this did not affect me in anyway. I was always able to joke about it, and I still can. Coming back to the pervert, he did this a couple of times and I was a bit more taken aback the second time. As a 6th grader who wants to be in the team, you wouldn't say no to the coach but I spoke to a couple of teammates and he had done this to them too. After he tried this trick on one of the 9th graders in the team, the student wrote a letter to the principal explaining what the coach has been up to with much exaggerated statements like, “He uses socks as condoms”. I didn't understand how a sock would work as a condom anyway. But the letter worked, and the freak was fired. Surprisingly no legal action was taken. All the hockey players had reason to believe he went all the way with one of the players, a very cute Sikh boy. During one of the practice sessions, this player made a lot of mistakes and so the coach sent him into the school to the top floor, and then in some time ended the practice early and sent us all home, while the boy was upstairs and the coach went up to join him. The next day the Sikh kid wasn't walking properly.

Hmmm, I wonder why?

I think all the teachers contributed to me having a fun-filled school experience. If it weren't the slapping incident, it would be one teacher crying because some other teacher said something to him/her. Or, it would be one teacher bitching to all the students about how she should be given the responsibility of managing all the class monitors and prefects, and not the new teacher in school. All in all, school life was filled with drama, just like a Bollywood movie, the very stuff that inspires every Indian. Where would we Indians be without Bollywood?

Considering my qualifications now, you might think that I was one of the nerds in school, with glasses and braces, not really into sports and could not speak to girls if my life dependent on it. *Au contraire*, I was anything but all of those things. I was into every sport possible. I represented the school in football, cricket (I am Indian, I have to play cricket), basketball, volleyball, handball, table tennis, badminton, field hockey and athletics. My parents were really proud of my sporting achievements, considering my brother was everything I described earlier; summing him up in school in one word, geek. I was known well amongst teachers and students because of sports, however, it only got me attention

from the not-so-good looking female crowd and I think this had a lot to do with me having no idea of how to carry myself with some swagger, or carry myself at all for that matter. Am I glad that changed over time?

“How will you learn to rise up without falling?”, “Failure is only a step towards success”. I am sure all of us are familiar with these words of wisdom, but we the proud athletes of Guru Harkrishan High School heard this after every game. We sucked in every sport. We might end up with one victory in a season, which would be caused by the other team not showing up, or some other miracle, but if we ever got a victory on the sheets, it would spark wild celebrations.

After all, we only got to do that once or twice a year. Out of all the teams, I would have to say the football team was the funniest. Though I had good skills with the ball (I am a good football player now, for the record), the coach decided to make me goalie because I was one of the tallest kids in the team. I didn't object as I just loved the sport and wanted to be a part of the team. As if that wasn't bad enough, he decided to make some Sikh boys defenders. Why would you make kids with turbans defenders? In each game we had one of them head the ball, only to have their turban removed, and so they would have to go to the

sidelines to tie back the small little thing which took at least 15-20 minutes, meaning we would be down by a man for that time. During one of the games, a winger from the other team ran down our left flank and crossed the ball. One of our brave Sikh defenders jumped up into the air and caught the ball with his hands. Yes, he caught the ball*. Of course the other team got a penalty, which I was unable to save. I wouldn't want to put all the blame on my defenders though. I was most certainly one of the worst goalies the sport had ever seen.

I distinctly remember one particular game against St. Francis D'Assisi, one of the best football schools in the city. It was a rainy day, and there was muck all over the ground, including the penalty area. Considering that they were one of the best teams and we were the worst, it wasn't surprising when they took, if my memory serves me right, an 8-0 lead at half time. They continued scoring in the second half as well, with even their goalkeeper substituting as an outfield player to grab a brace himself. In a field where there was hardly a dry spot, including the penalty box, and with so many balls covered with mud flying past me into the net, my jersey was spotless, clean as a whistle. For one of the goals, the ball went past me at a distance at which a small dive would have been

sufficient to make the save but I chose not to. One of the defenders asked me why I didn't dive for that ball, and I believe my exact words were, "I might get hurt if I dive". The final score of the game was 17-0. After these outstanding performances, the coach was replaced, and the new guy was the athletics coach, Mr. Ghodke, who didn't even know the rules of football. I convinced him I was an outfield player and a guy named Farid was made our goalie. I can go on for a very long time about the failures of the different teams I played for in school, like when we went to play our first ever basketball game, and we lost the game with the final score being 4-2. No there is no typo there; they scored two baskets, while we had one. I really hope that the school's sports program has come a long way since I graduated.

Every school has one or two nice girls, nice because they sleep around with most of the guys. I wouldn't want to call them sluts and insult them, after all a lot of us gained invaluable experience from these promiscuous women. Our school wanted to one up every other school in each and every department. So even in this regard, instead of having a couple of "nice" girls, we had at least one in each batch. Our batch had three, out of which two were sisters. Of course, though being a bit easy, they were picky too.

They wouldn't let the biggest losers (well all of us were losers) touch them. Had to be someone smart or someone good looking. Though I was smart, I somehow never had the courage to go up to one of them, and I guess I thought it was wrong to an extent. But there was this one moment that changed my take on this issue. There was a guy called Saj, a good-looking kid, who was actually a senior but had failed and had to repeat a year. One day, he was sitting behind one of the sisters in one class, and I was sitting in the adjacent row, in the same line of benches as them. In the middle of the lecture, I could hear giggles from behind me, and a friend sitting behind taps me on shoulder and asks to look at Saj. The guy was listening to the lecture with both his hands grasping the girl's frontal attractions from behind. Being one of the good students in the class, the first thing I thought of was, "How in the world is he concentrating on the lecture in that position?" Of course, I realized that focusing on the lecture was the least of his worries, and he was having a much better time than I ever did. That was the day I decided to take a stand on this issue, and make sure every guy has the right to enjoy lectures like that. A few days after that, I walked up to the other sister after school and told her I wanted to talk to her. We walked a bit, trying to get away from

civilization as I knew it, and then I just turned and kissed her, and she didn't pull away either. This was my first ever kiss, and man did it feel good*. Of course, I had a boner from that moment, sometime in the afternoon, till I went to sleep at night. Every evening I went outside to play with friends, and that day I decided to wear a cup, just in case. There were many similar moments to follow after that but that was definitely the most memorable one.

Being involved in so many sports, and being one of the toppers in school, it was a surprise to a lot of people that I would get sent to the principal's office quite often. I was even sent to the principal's office once for calling a particular teacher a "mofo", and someone ratted me out. The teacher was standing next to me in the principal's office and crying. Can you imagine the feeling I got as a 12/13 yr old to have made a teacher cry? It was the proudest moment of my school days.

At that age, kids are always very impressionable and find the smallest of things very cool. One day, my brother took a sharpie (sketch pen) and put it at the center of the ceiling fan and slowly moved it to the periphery of the fan, making beautiful concentric circles in the process which looked stunning when the fan was rotating. This really inspired me to do this in

class. The next day I went to school with just one thing in mind. As soon as the first class got over, I decorated the fan as planned. The other kids looked at it with astonishment, it was beautiful. I realized that I would get into trouble if I let it remain, so I took a wet cloth and erased the artwork. However, kids were a bit more impressed than I anticipated. Once the next class got over, they decided to do the same, but with ballpoint pens this time, which is of course next to impossible to erase from most surfaces. The teacher came in and saw the fans and asked who is responsible for it, and of course, like the good friends they were, everyone pointed towards me. I was asked to sit outside the classroom for three days unless my parents paid Rs.200 per fan to restore them. My dad just sent a letter to the principle saying, "We pay a lot of fees to the school anyway. I'm sure my son will enjoy the time outside class". My father knew me very well I suppose because I definitely enjoyed my three days out of class.

In India, not many folks have a sex talk with their kids. As a matter of fact, I personally don't know a single child who received sex education of any sort from their parents. The closest to that would be the parents giving a book to their children. Some schools would have a sex education lecture where the teacher

would come in and ask if the students had any question, wait for a response which usually never came because the students would be too shy to ask anything, and then would say good and continue with history or geography. This lack of knowledge led to a lot of misconceptions and myths, like if the girl doesn't bleed the first time she has sex she is not a virgin, or if the girl blows into your penis while giving you a head, you could die, or my personal favorite which was told to me by a friend that after sex you have to leave the penis inside the vagina for a good few hours for every drop of sperm to fall in. This guy either had a lot of sperm or just wanted to make sure he got every girl he ever slept with pregnant. Mr. Dias wanted to change this tradition. He wanted to make sure every student passing out of GHK High School knew about sex.

These classes would start with him walking into the class with lot of charts and pictures; he would even draw diagrams on the board, fascinating diagrams if I may add. Most of the pictures even turned some guys on I think. There were some weird questions asked too, like how many times do you have to have sex before getting pregnant. I suppose reproduction was a main concern for the students, after all, with only the second largest population in

the world, we had to close in on the number one spot and that huge responsibility was on our young shoulders. As an aftermath of the sex-ed, Mr. Dias even organized an AIDS awareness lecture, presented by two college students from a nearby girls' college. Yes, girls' college. Oh did I mention the two girls who came to our class were hot too? I still remember one of the girl's name was Sonal. Aaah Sonal! The whole purpose of AIDS awareness was moot considering that the only thing all the guys had in their heads was to do it with any one of them, with protection being our last concern of course. What else would you expect when two 18/19 yr old gorgeous women talk to 13 yr old boys? All of us asked the most nonsensical questions ever asked by mankind just to talk to them. Mine were, "Why don't sex workers get AIDS?", and, "Does AIDS spread via water?" I knew the answers too but who cared, an 18 yr old girl just spoke to me. After the awareness lecture, the girls were swarmed by the guys like bees over honey. One of my friends said his life was just made because his hand brushed Sonal's thigh. To be young again, and have these little things in life give you those pleasures. I doubt even actual sex would have given my friend that excitement he had that day. Some things are just priceless.

School always has crazy rumors flying around, a

lot of them. Our school had its fair share too. From having lesbian teachers, to girls being pregnant, I had heard them all. New girls and guys in school were always a hot topic of discussion. There was this one particular new girl who caught my eye. I don't know if I have ever told you guys this but I have a thing for dusky women, not that fair ones are unattractive, but if given a choice, I would always pick the dusky one. This new girl, Vedika, was dusky, intelligent and pretty good at sports too. She might not have been the best looking girl around but she had almost everything I was looking for in a woman. And did I mention she was well endowed too? All these things about her really attracted me towards her, and a lot of other guys. But she didn't really notice me, or refused to acknowledge me. I was not the most popular guy in school, neither was I the most good looking one, but I was good at sports, good at studies, pretty decent looking and was six feet tall in high school. That has to count for something.

Apparently, it didn't. Though through school years my self-confidence wasn't at its peak, my ego was still hurt by this newbie ignoring me. I know how the ladder system works. If a person above you on the ladder hits on you, you do not look away. How in the world was she looking away from me? As a young boy,

the first thing guys do to hit on girls is, be rude to them, be as mean as possible and I did the same. “Dude what is with your last name? Why is it so weird?”. However, it wasn't working, as a matter of fact, she had started resenting me. So I turned to plan B. I showed her my caring, sweet side. I would be as nice as possible, completely downplaying myself at every opportunity and as a prefect I would even take care of the 2nd graders, the class I was assigned to, and play with them a lot so that she could see how much I loved kids. And this tactic started working.

We both started calling each other after school, talking about our day though we were in the same class, bitching about others; it was the start of what is universally known as puppy love. But like any other love story, there had to be a villain, and in our story, it was a teacher. This teacher thought that a friend of mine and I would talk too much in class. So, she decided that we should be in different classes, and as a result, I was transferred to Div A. This was no upgrade of any sort, each grade was split into two divisions, A and B, and the students were randomly assigned to each class. However, I didn't want to leave my division because all my friends were in that class and also the girl I really liked; but I had to. For some

reason, this minor separation caused a major setback in my chances with Vedika. We stopped talking frequently, no more phone calls, if we ran into each other in the hallways; we would just smile at each other. Everything went pretty much downhill. But come 10th grade, our final year in GHK high school and things were destined to change.

In 10th grade, I started talking to this friend of Vedika's, Anu. Anu used to live in the same apartment complex as Vedika. I have no recollection of how I started talking to her, but it was a good move to say the least. She started giving me all the inside information about Vedika, and what I should do to impress her, and I followed her lead. It worked to perfection, and one day Anu told me that Vedika was waiting for me to ask her out. This was the moment I had been waiting for, I was in! I just had to play it cool and tell her how I felt and we would be officially dating. So I conjured up all my guts, and called her that fateful Sunday afternoon. My folks were taking in nap in the hall for some reason, and my brother was in the bedroom we shared. So I decided to go in the balcony and talk to her. And if my mother decided to eavesdrop, which she often did when I was on the phone talking in English*, she could have heard every

word I said. Luckily, she was fast asleep. I called Vedika and started making small talk. Then as I mustered up some courage I thought I should tell her how I felt. And I did it, I told her, "I love you". Yes I said I love you. You know why? Bollywood! I blame it completely on stupid Indian heroes using those three magical words every time in every movie. There was nothing like I like you or, I have feelings for you, or would you like to go out with me? There was just I love you. I did watch Hollywood movies too, but in those movies the guy usually ended up kissing the girl, or vice versa. That is a big no no in India. Physical activities were reserved for after marriage, at least that was the unwritten rule, but as we all know rules were meant to be broken. Anyway, so I said those words and was waiting for an answer, and in typical Hindi movie fashion she replied by saying the same three words back. If at that moment someone asked me the definition of love, they would have got the weirdest answer ever imaginable. Either of us, I'm sure, didn't know the meaning of love, we had an infatuation and that had to be love from what we knew. And that was how my first relationship began.

For some reason, I was transferred back to Div B in 10th grade, and it worked perfectly for us. The last few months in school we would be in the same class,

sitting very close to each other, talking whenever we got the opportunity, it was just perfect. We had small fights too, and whenever we fought, I would call her and just not talk. So it was a blank call where she knew it is me but not a single word out of my mouth. I really have no clue what I was trying to achieve by that. Was I giving her the silent treatment after I screwed up? Though it doesn't make sense, it somehow always worked. She would think I am feeling too guilty to talk which I was, and after a few of these blank calls, she would be fine again.

There was this other guy in class, Micky, who liked Vedika too. Though no one in school knew about us dating, everyone kind of had an idea, and Micky was the one worst affected by it. Days when Vedika and I would have a fight and give each other the cold shoulder, he would be the happiest guy in class, talking to her at every opportunity. And as soon as we would make up, he would be more depressed than Shah Rukh Khan in *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Ghum* after his father rejects his relationship with Kajol. Being the jerk that I am, I even came up with this plan where Vedika would tell Micky how much she likes him, and once he reciprocates she would laugh and say, "In your face!" She never did it for obvious reasons.

We had been dating for 4-5 months now, and nothing had happened physically. I wanted to make the first move but was afraid to do so, and she being the 'Indian woman' didn't think it was right for her to make the first move. I suppose we never found time alone either. Towards the final few months of our school days, we both were really engrossed in studies, as 10th standard board exams determined which junior college (11th & 12th grade) you went to. Both of us wanted to go to a good college being good students. My board exams had some drama associated with it too. Right before our algebra exam, the examination center I was in caught fire due to some electrical short circuit. This caused a delay in our exam, and all the students were frantically calling their parents up to tell them about the incident, and to inform them that they will be late getting home. The guy in front of me in the line at a booth called his mom and said, "*Maa idhar aag lagi hui hai*" (Mom, there is a fire here). His mom misunderstood that statement and thought the movie Fire, which had just released and was about lesbians in India, was playing close to the exam center. Her reply was, "*Beta, picture mat dekh. Exam pe dhyan de*" (Son, don't watch the movie now, focus on your exams). It was hard to write my algebra exam after that with a straight face. After every problem I

solved, I would keep replaying the conversation the kid had with his mother and I would crack up. One of the supervisors even warned me that if I didn't stop giggling, she would throw me out of the exam. During my geography exams, I did not know the answers to match the column questions. Since my going to a good college depended on it, I had to get those answers somehow. There was a girl sitting right next to me in the adjacent row, who used to write a lot in every exam. So I thought she would know the answers. I decided to ask her the answers, and she was more than happy in helping me out. I stepped outside after the exam and compared answers with a friend of mine, an intelligent friend, and the entire match the column answers were wrong. That was the day I decided never to trust women ever again.

I got through the rest of the exams without any further incidents. I spent the vacations practicing badminton, playing a lot of badminton tournaments, including playing the state championships, where I lost miserably, and my doubles partner and I were taken to the limit by a couple of U-13 boys in the first round, and the top seeds ran all over us in the second round. Vedika, in the meanwhile, was busy focusing on roller skating and trying to learn table tennis. We had a good summer overall, spent a lot of time

together without any physical contact. The results of the board exams were out soon. Vedika got 85%, while I got 81%. Though I was not satisfied with my result, it was the end of my days at GHK high school. No matter how much I make fun of this school, I had a wonderful time with all my teachers and friends in one way or the other. I would like to thank the school for helping me where I am right now, jobless.

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