

Oranges in the Rain
Finding Sweetness in Life's Storms

SAKSHI SHARMA



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For permissions requests or inquiries regarding this publication,
please contact:

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS

www.BlueRoseONE.com

info@bluerosepublishers.com

+91 8882 898 898

+4407342408967

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Dedication

*For my father,
my first hero,
who taught me how to stand
even when life asked me to kneel.*

*For my husband,
my strongest support,
who walked beside me
when the road was breaking.*

*And for my daughter,
my forever hope,
who turned my storms
into sunshine.*

Preface / Author's Note

This book is not fiction.
It is my life—
told with honesty, pain, and hope.
I did not write this to show strength.
I wrote it to remember it.
There were many moments when I wanted to give up—
on love,
on dreams,
on myself.
But something always held me back.
Sometimes it was family.
Sometimes it was faith.
Sometimes it was just responsibility.
I believe stories heal.
Not because they change the past,
but because they remind us we are not alone.
If my journey makes you feel seen,
or gives you courage on a hard day,
then this book has done what it was meant to do.
This is not a story of perfection.
It is a story of persistence.
And this is my truth.
— *Sakshi Sharma*

Chapter-by-Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 – Blurred Beginnings

- Early memories shaped by uncertainty, distance, or emotional confusion.
- Introduce family dynamics and subtle feelings of absence.
- A sense of growing up in emotional “fog” where nothing feels fully clear.
- Symbolism: steady rain representing unclear childhood; a faint glimpse of an orange as quiet hope.

Chapter 2 – Voices Across Distance

- Long-distance conversations, phone calls, letters, or emotional gaps between loved ones.
- The pain of hearing someone’s voice but still feeling far away.
- Learning how silence can speak louder than words.
- Symbolism: rain against windows; oranges as warmth carried across miles.

Chapter 3 – Learning to Leave

- First experience of leaving home – physically or emotionally.
- Internal conflict between loyalty and independence.
- Growth through discomfort and stepping into the unknown.
- Symbolism: walking into the rain alone; holding an orange as courage during transition.

Chapter 4 – A Father Comes Home

- Reunion, reconciliation, or confronting unresolved emotions.
- Exploring complexity – love mixed with hurt and misunderstanding.
- Small gestures that begin healing instead of dramatic apologies.
- Symbolism: sharing an orange; rain softening from storm to drizzle.

Chapter 5 – When Love First Knocked

- The arrival of romantic love or deep emotional connection.
- Vulnerability, hesitation, and learning to trust again.
- Joy mixed with fear of repeating past wounds.
- Symbolism: first sunlight breaking through clouds; peeling an orange together as intimacy.

Chapter 6 – Moments of Joy

- Successes, celebrations, or meaningful achievements.
- Highlight contrasts between happiness and lingering struggles.
- Recognizing that joy can exist even when life isn't perfect.
- Symbolism: a sunny moment after the rain; “oranges” as hope shining through.

Chapter 7 – The Thunder Before the Rain

- Conflict, loss, or emotional confrontation building beneath the surface.
- Tension rising in relationships or within oneself.
- Old wounds resurfacing during moments of stress.
- Symbolism: distant thunder signaling coming change; an orange slipping from one's hand.

Chapter 8 – Oranges After the Rain

- Healing, reflection, and quiet resilience after hardship.
- Acceptance that pain shaped strength rather than weakness.
- Rebuilding relationships or rediscovering inner peace.
- Symbolism: rain-washed streets glowing under light; oranges brighter after the storm.

Chapter 9 – Why I Call It Oranges in the Rain

- Reflection on the journey and the meaning behind the title.
- Understanding that storms are unavoidable, but sweetness can coexist within them.
- A personal philosophy about resilience, gratitude, and emotional growth.
- Symbolism: holding an orange calmly in gentle rain – no longer afraid of the storm.

Chapter 1

Blurred Beginnings

The rain fell in quiet sheets, soft but insistent, drumming on the tin roof of our little house. I opened the door to the narrow alley behind us, the earthy scent of wet soil rising to greet me. Every droplet seemed to whisper secrets I almost understood but couldn't quite grasp. I pulled my shawl tighter around my shoulders and glanced at the small basket of oranges on the doorstep. Their bright, round faces glowed like tiny suns against the grey, rain-soaked world.

I smiled faintly, but then a blurry memory bubbled to the surface—one that had never left me. I was small then, living with my mother and younger brother. My father, with his government police job, was always moving to a new city, and every six months it felt like our world shifted. But nothing had felt as heavy as the day my mother and brother left for one of my father's postings.

I remembered clutching my small suitcase, my knuckles white, as my mother knelt to hug me.

"Be strong, beta," she whispered, brushing a strand of hair from my forehead. Her eyes shimmered with unshed tears, and I realized even then that I wasn't ready to be strong.

Two years. Two long years spent in my grandfather's joint family. I loved them—my cousins, my uncle, my aunt—but it wasn't home. Their voices were kind, their smiles warm, but none of it filled the emptiness that followed me everywhere. Nights were the worst. I would curl up on the small cot, staring at the ceiling, hearing laughter echo from the living room, wishing desperately for my

mother's lullabies or my brother's mischievous giggle. I missed them as though they had been torn from me forever.

Even now, the memory made my chest ache. Maybe that's why the scent of oranges always struck something deep inside me—the sweetness a reminder that even small joys could survive the storms.

Today, school had been a mess. A whispered argument with my best friend. A teacher's sharp words cutting through the fragile shield I had built around myself. The rain mirrored my mood, relentless and grey. I hugged the basket of oranges closer, letting the citrusy fragrance seep into my senses. One small sun in a stormy world.

I stepped into the alley, letting the rain soak my shoes. My heart felt heavy, yet a tiny spark of hope flickered inside me. Storms came and went, yes, but sometimes, life—like these oranges—offered a sweetness that made the grey bearable.

And for the first time that day, I allowed myself to believe that maybe, just maybe, I could find my way back to warmth again.

Chapter 2

Voices Across Distance

The first storm of my life did not come with thunder or lightning.

It came quietly, wrapped in a school uniform and heavy silence.

After my mother and brother left, I stayed behind at my grandfather's house. The house was always full—voices, footsteps, laughter—but inside, I felt strangely alone. My cousins ran across the courtyard in noisy groups, while I sat near the doorway, watching them like someone who did not quite belong.

“Go and play,” my aunt would say softly.

I nodded, but my feet refused to move.

At night, when the house finally fell asleep, I hid my face under the blanket and whispered into the darkness,

“Maa... when will you come back?”

The ceiling never answered.

School became both my escape and my battlefield. Other children talked about their parents waiting outside the gate, about lunchboxes packed with love. I listened without speaking. Once, a girl asked,

“Why don't you live with your parents?”

My throat tightened. My eyes burned. I ran to the washroom and cried into my hands, afraid someone might hear the sound of something breaking inside me.

Festivals came and went, but they felt incomplete. New clothes didn't feel new. Sweets didn't taste sweet.

I learned something too early: **missing someone can hurt more than being scolded.**

Sometimes, the telephone rang.

My heart would race before I picked it up.

"Maa?" I whispered into the receiver.

Her voice came from far away, thin and crackling, but warm.

"Are you eating properly?"

"Are you studying?"

"Are you being brave?"

I wanted to say, *I am not brave. I just miss you.*

But instead, I said, "Yes, Maa."

The call always ended too soon. The dial tone felt louder than her voice.

One evening, rain poured over the old house, washing the courtyard clean. I stood by the window, watching water slide down the glass. My aunt came and placed an orange in my hand.

"Eat," she said. "You haven't touched your food."

I peeled it slowly. The sharp, fresh smell filled the room.

When I tasted it, something shifted inside me.

For a moment, the heaviness lifted.

That was when I learned something small but important:

Even when life takes away what you love, it leaves behind tiny comforts—

if you are willing to hold them.
Those two years changed me.
I became quieter.
I learned how to wait.
I learned how to miss.
And without knowing it, I learned how to survive storms.
Because somewhere inside me lived one hope:
One day, I would run back into my mother's arms...
and the rain inside my heart would finally stop.

Chapter 3

Learning to Leave

Slowly, life began to change again.

One day, the telephone rang, and this time, the news was different.

My mother was coming for me.

She had missed me too much, she said.

“I can’t leave you behind again,” her voice trembled.

“You will come with me this time.”

I packed my clothes in a small bag and said goodbye to my grandfather’s house. I hugged my cousins, touched my grandfather’s feet, and walked away from the place that had held my tears for two long years.

Only after leaving did I understand something painful:

I had grown roots there.

On the train to my father’s new posting city, I stared out of the window and felt a strange ache inside me. I missed the noisy courtyard. I missed my cousins’ laughter. I missed the smell of food from my aunt’s kitchen. For the first time, I missed a place I thought I never belonged to.

That feeling stayed with me.

A feeling of missing what I had just left behind.

A feeling of always arriving late into my own life.

I call it FOMO now, but back then, it had no name.
It only had a weight.
New city. New school. New uniform.
Again.
From childhood itself, I learned how to begin again and again.
Every time I made friends, my father got transferred.
Every time I started feeling settled, life packed my bags for me.
So I became good at something unusual:
Making friends quickly.
I learned how to smile easily.
How to sit beside a stranger and turn them into a classmate.
How to laugh in new classrooms.
But inside my mind, a small voice always warned me:
Don't get too attached. You will have to leave.
I liked people.
But I never trusted permanence.
Still, small joys found me.
A friend who shared lunch.
A teacher who praised my handwriting.
A playground that felt familiar for a few months.
And sometimes, oranges.
In every new city, in every new market, oranges tasted the same.
Sweet. Sharp. Alive.
They reminded me that even when everything else changed,
some things stayed constant.
Why am I telling you all this now?

Because this habit of leaving...
this fear of missing out...
this skill of making and losing connections...
It did not end in childhood.
You will understand later.

Chapter 4

A Father Comes Home

By the time I reached my teenage years, I already knew how to leave.

New city.

New school.

New people.

Again.

I wore confidence like a school badge. I knew how to walk into a classroom and pretend I belonged there. I knew how to answer when someone asked,

“Where are you from?”

I had learned to say many places, but never one home.

At first, it felt like a gift.

I was good at talking to people.

Good at blending in.

Good at being liked.

But slowly, I realized something bitter:

Being good at meeting people does not mean being good at keeping them.

I made friends again. We shared benches, secrets, snacks. We wrote names on notebooks and promised to stay in touch. But somewhere inside me, I already knew the truth.

This will not last.

So when they laughed, I laughed.

When they cried, I listened.

But when they planned the future, I stayed quiet.

Because I had seen the future.

It always came with a transfer letter.

Then one day...

Life surprised me.

My father came home and said something I had never heard before.

“We are not moving this time,” he said.

“We will stay with your grandfather now. Permanently.”

For a moment, I didn’t understand the word *permanently*.

Then it hit me.

No more packing.

No more goodbyes.

No more new schools.

My feet touched the sky that day.

I was on the seventh heaven.

For the first time, I felt rooted.

The house of my grandfather was no longer a stop —
it became home.

From that day onwards, something changed between my father and me.

I saw him differently.

Not just as a man who came home tired from duty,

but as a man who carried all of us on his shoulders.
A middle-class government employee...
with dreams bigger than his salary.
He did everything for our happiness.
He worked through transfers, through distance, through
exhaustion —
so that my brother and I could study well, eat well, live better.
My brother was more immature than me.
He wanted toys, food, clothes, freedom.
And my father gave him everything.
Sometimes, I watched him quietly and felt something heavy
inside.
He fulfilled everyone's wishes —
mine, my brother's, my mother's, the family's.
But who fulfilled his?
That thought made me love him more...
and hurt for him too.
He became my role model.
Not because he was powerful.
But because he never complained.
Stability finally came into my life.
But with it came understanding.
I learned new lessons:
That sacrifice often wears a smile.
That responsibility can look like love.
That a home is built not with walls —

but with effort.

Sometimes, in the evening, I walked to the market alone.

I bought an orange.

I peeled it slowly, thinking about him.

About us.

Life tasted like that orange again.

Sweet.

But sharp.

Because happiness had finally come...

but it was built on his tired shoulders.

And that was my biggest bittersweet lesson.

Chapter 5

When Love First Knocked

Stability had finally settled into my life when love arrived.

I was finishing college then, standing at the edge of adulthood, unsure of where life was taking me. And that was when my first love entered my story.

He was not a stranger.

He belonged to my caste.

He had studied with me in the same school during my 11th and 12th standard.

Back then, we barely liked each other. We walked past without noticing. Destiny was quiet in those days.

But destiny waited.

We met again at a school friend's wedding. The music was loud, the lights were bright, and suddenly, there he was—standing in front of me like a familiar page from a book I thought I had finished reading.

We talked.

We laughed.

We exchanged phone numbers.

From there, everything changed.

We started meeting often. Long conversations turned into shared silences. Slowly, he began to make me feel special—without big promises, without drama. Just small things.

He wrote poems for me.

He remembered little details about me.

He spoke about the future as if I was already part of it.

I didn't know if it was love or just comfort, but I liked his company. I liked how he looked at me like I mattered.

Our families knew each other well.

Same caste.

Family friends.

Same social functions.

My parents knew him.

His parents knew me.

It felt... safe.

Familiar.

Almost written.

But destiny, once again, chose a different road.

He moved to another city to build his career. Distance entered between us quietly, like fog. Calls became less frequent. Meetings became memories.

I told myself, *This will not work.*

And I let go.

I moved on.

But he did not.

He stayed where we had begun.

He kept loving me silently.

And that is the kind of love that leaves guilt behind.

I focused on my career.

On becoming independent.

On becoming strong.
But sometimes, in the quiet moments, I thought of him.
Of his poems.
Of the future he had planned.
And I felt something heavy in my chest.
Not regret.
Not love.
But guilt.
Because he stayed...
and I walked ahead.
That was my first lesson in love:
Sometimes, timing hurts more than rejection.
Sometimes, destiny does not break hearts—
it simply moves people in different directions.
That chapter of my life ended without anger.
Without blame.
Only with distance.
And like always, I peeled an orange one evening and thought
about it all.
Sweet.
Sharp.
Gone.

Chapter 6

Moments of Joy

After letting go of my first love, I held onto something else—my future.

I focused on my career with a seriousness I had never known before.

No more waiting.

No more wondering.

Only effort.

And then, life surprised me.

I got a career opportunity in **Bangalore**.

For me, it was not just a job.

It was freedom.

It was a big city.

It was my first chance to live outside my hometown.

But for my mother, it was fear.

“Bangalore is too far,” she said.

“How will you manage alone?”

She was worried about distance, safety, food, people—everything.

For the first time in my life, I did not step back.

I was adamant.

After completing my entire graduation in my hometown, this felt like destiny knocking loudly.

I wanted to go.

I needed to go.

With a heavy heart and brave face, my mother finally agreed.

And just like that, I entered a new world.

Bangalore smelled like rain and ambition.

Training days were long.

Classrooms were full of strangers who would soon become stories.

And among those strangers,

I met **him**.

A South Indian boy.

And me—a North Indian girl.

Two states.

Two broken hearts.

One long walking lane.

We spoke for the first time while walking together after training.

About our past.

About our disappointments.

About our fears.

Somewhere between shared pain and shared silence,

we felt something special.

He was serious about the future.

Almost frighteningly serious.

Within one week,

he searched for our kundali online.

“Let’s see if destiny agrees,” he said half-jokingly.

Destiny did.

After training, when I went back home,

I did something I never imagined.

I told my parents,

“I have found my life partner.”

My mother refused at first.

South Indian boy.

Different culture.

Different language.

Her heart was not ready.

But my father—

my quiet hero—

stood beside me again.

Slowly.

Gently.

With logic and love.

He convinced my mother.

And within **six months of dating**,

we got engaged.

I moved to Delhi for posting.

Life felt... settled.

Work was going well.

Love felt safe.

Family had accepted.

For the first time,

everything seemed in place.
North met South.
Dream met reality.
Heart met hope.
And I believed—
this time, the rain had stopped.
But storms never announce themselves.
And the thunder that followed...
you will know in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

The Thunder Before the Rain

For one full year, life behaved.
New job.

New city.

New love.

New responsibilities.

I learned how to balance office files and wedding plans.

EMIs and emotions.

Dreams and duties.

Everything was going smoothly.

So smoothly... that I forgot storms still existed.

Then my father chose our wedding date.

14th February.

Valentine's Day.

I laughed.

Love and marriage on the same day — classic Papa style.

Only one month was left.

Venues were booked.

Invitations printed.

Money invested.

Dreams prepared.
And then...
The phone rang.
“Your grandfather is no more.”
The ground moved under my feet.
The man whose house once felt like exile...
and later became home...
was suddenly gone.
Grief mixed with confusion.
Should the wedding happen?
Should we stop everything?
But families decided —
the marriage would not be postponed.
One week before the wedding,
fate struck again.
My future father-in-law got a **brain stroke**.
I remember sitting on the bed, asking the ceiling fan,
Is this marriage even meant to happen?
My partner held my hand and said,
“Don’t worry. We will marry on the same day. I will manage everything.”
And somehow...
We did.
On **14th February**,
I became **Mrs. Mudhol**.
Seven clouds under my feet.

My love beside me.
Sindoor on my forehead.
Hope in my eyes.
I thought the rain had ended.
But storms don't finish in one round.
Within one week of marriage,
another phone call came.
"Your father met with a major accident."
ICU.
Coma.
Minimal chances.
The man who carried the world on his shoulders...
was now lying still.
For two months, he did not open his eyes.
For five months, he did not remember who he was.
The cheerful father became a body on a bed.
And I became a zombie.
Alive.
But not living.
Doctors.
Medicines.
Bills.
Silence.
Financial pressure crushed both families.
My husband blamed himself.
"I wish you had married a rich man."

You married an average earning guy with no backup.”
I smiled through tears and said,
“I bet on you.
One day you will be successful.
I am Sudha Murthy... and you are my Narayan Murthy.
We will grow together.”
We laughed...
even while breaking.
And then...
One morning, I saw two lines on a test strip.
Pregnant.
Shock and happiness together.
Becoming a mother while watching my father fight for life...
was the hardest emotion I ever carried.
When we told Papa about the baby,
he started recovering the next day.
Hope came back.
But destiny was still not done.
The very next day,
my husband met with an accident.
One month of bed rest.
I stood in the middle of my life, asking:
Why me, God?
Why again and again?
Still...
I walked.
With fear in my stomach.

With prayer in my breath.
I delivered a **beautiful baby girl**.
For the first time in months,
there was laughter again.
We were healing.
Slowly.
Carefully.
And then...
After a few months...
My father left us.
My role model.
My backbone.
My hero.
Gone.
That news did not just break me.
It emptied me.
The man who taught me strength...
took mine with him.
And the rain that fell that day...
was not outside.
It was inside my chest.

Chapter 8

Oranges After the Rain

A fter my father left,
life did not stop.
It just... slowed down.
Days passed like heavy clouds.
Nights were louder than mornings.
I held my daughter in my arms and wondered
how one heart could feel so full and so empty at the same time.
She did not know grief.
She only knew hunger, sleep, and my voice.
So I learned to smile again —
not for myself,
but for her.
Motherhood came to me in the middle of chaos.
I did not become a mother gently.
I became one while crying.
Some nights, I rocked her and whispered stories about her
grandfather —
the man who would have carried her on his shoulders.
The man who taught me how to be strong.

And slowly...
I realized something.
I was not just someone's daughter anymore.
I was someone's shelter.
My husband stayed beside me like a wall.
Not loud.
Not dramatic.
Just present.
When I broke, he held.
When I panicked, he planned.
When I doubted, he believed.
We were still not rich.
Still paying hospital bills.
Still counting expenses.
But we were standing.
Together.
Sometimes we laughed about our bad luck.
"Too much drama for one life," he said once.
I smiled and replied,
"God is testing premium subscribers only."
And for the first time in months,
I laughed without crying.
Grief changed me.
I became quieter.
Stronger.
More careful with happiness.

I no longer dreamed loudly.
But I worked silently.
My daughter became my sunrise.
Her first smile.
Her tiny fingers holding mine.
Her breath on my neck.
She gave me a reason to wake up.
Slowly, routines returned.
Milk bottles.
Office emails.
Doctor visits.
Managing EMTs.
Life stitched itself back together —
not perfectly,
but enough.
I understood something my father once tried to teach me:
Strength is not loud.
It is repetitive.
You wake up.
You work.
You love.
You survive.
Some days, I still talk to him in my mind.
“Papa, look... I am managing.”
And in the quiet of my heart,
I feel he answers,

“I know.”

I do not say my life is easy now.

But I say this:

I have learned how to walk in rain
without asking the sky to stop.

And sometimes...

when the rain is gentle,

I see oranges growing again.

Sweet.

Messy.

Earned.

Chapter 9

Why I Call It Oranges in the Rain

I used to think life was either sweet
or bitter.

Either sunshine
or storm.

Either childhood
or adulthood.

Either love
or loss.

But my life taught me something else.
It taught me that sweetness often grows
in the middle of rain.

My childhood was rain —
missing my mother,
moving cities,
losing homes before learning how to belong.

But in that rain,
I learned how to make friends.
How to adjust.

How to survive separation.
That was my first orange.
Love came like sunshine —
poems, dreams, future plans.
Then it left like sudden clouds.
That was rain again.
But it taught me focus.
Independence.
Self-respect.
Another orange.
Marriage came with flowers
and funerals together.
Joy and shock
in the same month.
My grandfather left.
My father-in-law fell sick.
My father went into coma.
I became a bride and a nurse at the same time.
Rain without warning.
But in that rain,
I found my husband.
Not as a lover...
but as a partner.
Another orange.
Then came pregnancy —
hope after tragedy.

A new life
while I was losing my strongest support.
My father left this world
after giving me the courage
to stay in it.
That was the heaviest rain.
But my daughter arrived
like a small sun
in a cloudy sky.
My last orange.
I understand now—
Oranges are not given
when the sky is clear.
They grow
when the soil is wet
from tears.
My story is not about suffering.
It is about **continuing**.
About walking forward
even when knees shake.
About loving
even when loss is familiar.
About believing
even when God feels silent.
I am not special because I survived.
I am special because I kept loving

while surviving.

If you are reading this
and your life feels unfair...

Remember:

Rain does not mean the end of fruit.

Storm does not mean the end of sweetness.

Sometimes...

Life gives you oranges

in the rain.

And that

is its strange way

of saying—

“You are stronger than you think.”



Acknowledgements

This book exists because I did not walk alone.

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I thank my mother, for her silent sacrifices and endless worry that always came from love.

I thank my husband, for standing beside me in every storm, for believing in me when I doubted myself, and for turning survival into partnership.

I thank my daughter, for giving meaning to my pain and light to my darkest days.

I thank both my families, who supported us emotionally and financially when life tested us beyond limits.

And finally, I thank myself—for not giving up, for choosing courage over comfort, and for telling my story even when it hurt.

This book is not just a story.

It is proof that even in the rain, something sweet can grow.

About the Author

The author is a working professional, wife, and mother who believes in finding meaning in everyday struggles. Her writing reflects real life—its pain, its hope, and its quiet victories. This book is based on her true experiences and is written for anyone who has ever felt tested by life.

Oranges in the Rain is her first book and her most personal one.