



## A: AM I AN IDIOT?

8 a.m.: The prodigal son, the baby and I are wildly dancing to ‘All about that bass’, a song that primarily deals with the concept that a big backside is infinitely better, and since the baby can also just about warble through the chorus, this is immediately declared our favourite song of all time. The radio plays on and there is the notorious *Anaconda* song again about having a big booty, and when the baby starts trying to mouth, ‘Oh my God, look at her butt’, an observation that

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may not go down so well with her playschool teachers, I hastily switch the music off.

9 a.m.: Trying to check my emails, I get hold of my iPad and boom there it is: #breaktheinternet and pictures of Kim Kardashian pouring champagne while balancing a glass on her bottom. Kimmy darling, why didn't you tell me you wanted a drink? You really didn't need to pose as a human bar counter; I would have just sent my Ramu and Pappu. One would hold the glass, the other would pour and you could sit, relax and use your posterior to break the sofa instead.

To digress a little, before the world even knew Kimmy existed, we had the famous choreographer Saroj Khan who could certainly balance a tray and a cup of tea on her bottom if she tried, not that she ever did. She used that bit to sway gloriously and teach others to do the same. Just like our politicians, I am bringing this up to prove that anything anyone



can do, we Indians could have or have done it earlier and better.

As I am formulating the rest of my patriotic speech, I hear the man of the house say, ‘Can you be quiet for just five minutes?’ And I realize that I have actually been speaking aloud while hunched over my iPad. Blimey . . .

11 a.m.: Sitting in front of my computer and drinking coffee, I spot an email from my accountant stating, ‘Dear Madam, My sister very dangerous. I want to saw her. Please give leave three days! Good day, Srinivasan’

Hmm . . . Either his sister is a serial killer and he has decided to cut her in half or as I quickly figure (with the help of a strong swig of coffee), he is saying that his sister is sick and he wants to see her.

I send him an email back informing him that since this is his nineteenth relative in grave danger, he needs to either consult a tantric to remove a curse on his family or to simply stop lying to take extra days off. I shut my computer and hurriedly get ready to reach the office.

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4 p.m.: I am at the store and we are launching our new collection when I notice that instead of dealing with a customer who will hopefully spend all her husband's hard-earned money on my beautiful, gold-embossed candles, my salesgirl is fast asleep at her desk. I tentatively wipe drool from the cash register and give her a sharp nudge. She yelps awake and then gives me her sorry tale of being sleep deprived due to her husband's daily sonorous and torturous snoring. Blimey . . .

7.45 p.m.: Mother has come over for a cup of tea, and as we are chatting, the prodigal son runs into the room and yells that he needs to buy a book urgently for his English assignment. Crossword is the nearest bookstore, so we quickly decide to go there. I grab my bag with one hand, lug the baby with the other and hurriedly ask mom to drop us off at the store while leaving instructions with the watchman to inform our driver to reach Crossword in twenty minutes.

8.10 p.m.: We are at the bookstore and I tell the prodigal son, 'Hey, let's go to that aisle, I need

some pens and I can see some marker pens there.’ And the baby immediately chirps, ‘Where pens? Show me!’ She is at such a precious age; curious about everything. We buy two books on poetry for the prodigal son and a Dora sticker book for the baby and head out.

Standing on the dark pavement, I am scanning the street for my car to no avail. I try calling the driver but the number is unreachable, and after fifteen minutes of being stared at by passers-by with the baby squirming in my arms, the prodigal son says that he sees a rickshaw. The baby squeaks, ‘Where rickshaw? Show me!’

8.30 p.m.: The prodigal son hails the rickshaw and we all clamber in. This is the baby’s first ride in a rickshaw and she is rather thrilled. We then turn into the long private road that leads to our building when the rickshaw driver suddenly says, ‘Madam, that hero Akshay Kumar used to live here but now he lives in Bandra.’

As my mouth falls open and before I can protest, he continues, ‘Arrey, he’s married to Rajesh Khanna’s daughter, na, and Dimple

Kapadia is there but the daughter doesn't have anything to do with the mother; especially now that she is the only heir. So this Akshay and his family have all moved to that big house in Bandra.'

Bemused with the nonsense this moronic man is spouting, I say, 'Really? And how would you know that?' Pat comes the answer, '*Madam, rickshaw chalata hun, sab pata hain.*' (We rickshaw drivers know everything.)

The prodigal son starts laughing hysterically as I struggle to pull out my fare of seventeen rupees, and we run up the stairs to our house.

The man of the house is sprawled on the couch and I breathlessly start narrating the whole sequence. 'So funny! Listen, na, apparently Akshay Kumar used to live here but now he lives in Bandra and his wife hates her mother and . . .'

The man of the house narrows his eyes and exclaims, 'You were heading towards it but now you have gone certifiably insane. What are you babbling about Akshay and his wife and her mother? That's us, our family! Who refers to

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their entire family in the third person? You are really an idiot.'

I immediately correct him. 'The word is not idiot but illeist. Illeist is a person who talks in the third person, whereas an idiot just talks; though they sound similar, they cannot be used in place of each other.'

Shrugging his shoulders and giving me a goofy grin, he retorts, 'I don't know what an illeist is but I know an idiot when I see one.'

The baby immediately stops playing with her tea set, looks up and says, 'Where idiot? Show me!'

Blimey . . .