

written by Nitesh Agarwal

FINDING MYSELF IN THE LIES



AUTHOR'S NOTE

If even one person reading this realizes that they are enough just as they are, then this story has done its job.

This work is a piece of fiction, but the emotions within it are real. The characters, their struggles, and their victories may be imagined, but they reflect the universal human experience—the longing for belonging, the search for purpose, and the strength it takes to keep going despite the odds.

Fiction has a unique power: it allows us to see ourselves in stories that aren't our own, to find comfort in words that may have been written for someone else, and to understand that, no matter how different our paths may be, we are never truly alone. If this story has resonated with you, reminded you of your own journey, or simply given you a moment of reflection, then it has served its purpose.

Writing this has been a journey of its own—one filled with hope, introspection, and the desire to connect with each of you. And if you've made it to this note, I want you to know how truly grateful I am for your time, your presence, and your willingness to be part of this journey with me.

You matter. Your story matters. Keep believing in yourself, keep pushing forward, and never forget—you are enough, just as you are.

Thank you for being here. Thank you for reading. Thank you for sharing this moment with me.

With all my heart,
Nitesh Agarwal

CHAPTER :-I

Who I Was

A Life

Without Attention

If you had asked me a year ago who I was, I wouldn't have known what to say. Maybe just a guy. Not the class topper. Not the troublemaker. Not the one who cracked the funniest jokes. I wasn't someone people turned to when they needed help or wanted to share a secret. I was just another student in a sea of faces, passing through the school hallways without leaving a trace and that scared me.

It wasn't that I had no friends. I did. But I was never the first choice. I wasn't the person people sought out in a crowded room. I wasn't the one others looked at with admiration or curiosity. If I missed a day of school, no one really noticed. If I was quiet during lunch, no one asked if something was wrong.

I remember sitting in class one day, watching how people naturally fit into roles. The toppers—confident and respected. The funny ones—always the center of attention. The athletes—loud, energetic, moving through school like they owned it.

And then there was me—somewhere in the middle, unseen, unheard. I wasn't jealous of them. I didn't want to be the funniest or the smartest. I just wanted to be noticed. To feel like I mattered. But how do you become someone worth noticing when you don't have anything special to offer?

That question followed me everywhere. In the hallways, in the classroom, even at home when I was lying in bed at night, staring at the ceiling. I wondered if I would always just be there—a name in a yearbook, a face that no one would remember after graduation. And that thought terrified me more than anything.

The Desire to Be Noticed

At first, I thought maybe I could change myself—try harder to be funnier, smarter, or more outspoken. But every time I tried to be loud in a group, my voice felt unnatural, forced. Every time I tried to be the “smart one,” someone else would answer before me. Every time I tried to fit in, I felt like an outsider.

Then, I started to pay attention to what made people interesting. It wasn't just talent or intelligence—it was how they told their stories. The class clown didn't always have the funniest life, but he knew how to make things sound hilarious. The guy who was always admired didn't necessarily have the most exciting experiences, but he knew how to talk about them in a way that made people listen.

Maybe I could do that too.

So, I started experimenting.

It began with small things. Someone would talk about a trip they went on, and I'd say, "Oh, I've been there too."

So, I started experimenting. It began with small things. Someone would talk about a trip Someone would mention a funny accident, and I'd twist a small moment from my life to make it sound bigger, funnier, more dramatic.

The first time I exaggerated something, it wasn't even intentional. I was talking about a school event, and before I realized it, I had added details that weren't true. People laughed, nodded, and actually listened.

And the strangest part?

It worked.

People actually started noticing me. They asked me more questions. They laughed at my stories. They seemed interested in what I had to say.

For the first time, I felt seen.

And I liked it.

That's when I realized something dangerous:

Reality is boring. But a good lie? A good lie makes you interesting.

The First Step Into Lies

At first, I convinced myself that I wasn't really lying. I was just improving my stories. Making them sound better. More exciting. More memorable. But slowly, those small exaggerations turned into something bigger.

I started claiming skills I didn't have. Pretending I had hobbies I had never actually tried.

Shaping myself into someone who was more than just a guy in the crowd.

And for a while, it felt good.

I remember the first time someone called me “interesting.” It was such a simple word, but it felt like validation—like I had finally done something right. It made me want more.

So, I kept going.

I started reading up on things I had never done so I could talk about them like I had. If someone mentioned a book, I’d say I had read it and throw in a quote I found online. If someone talked about a hobby, I’d pretend I knew all about it.

It was a game—a game where I kept upgrading myself into the person I thought people wanted me to be.

But what I didn’t realize back then was that the more I shaped this new version of myself, the further I drifted from who I really was.

And once you start down that road, it’s almost impossible to stop.

CHAPTER :-2

The Fear of Being Ordinary

The Realization
of Being Invisible

School had a way of making you realize your place.

There were the achievers—the ones teachers trusted, the ones whose names were always on the toppers' list. Then there were the entertainers—the ones who made people laugh effortlessly, who turned boring lectures into comedy shows. And, of course, the athletes—the ones who owned the playground, who were always surrounded by teammates, loud cheers, and high-fives.

And then, there were people like me.

Not the best at anything. Not the worst either. Just there.

I was the kind of student teachers wouldn't scold much because I wasn't disruptive, but they wouldn't praise me either because I never stood out. I was the friend who was included in plans but never the one making them. The guy who sat at the back of the classroom, neither failing nor excelling, just existing.

And for a long time, I told myself it didn't matter. That I didn't need attention. That I didn't care if people noticed me or not.

But one day, I realized I was lying to myself.

It happened during a normal school day. The teacher asked a question—an easy one. Hands shot up. Some belonged to the usual toppers, eager to prove themselves. Others belonged to the funny ones, trying to turn their answer into a joke. I sat there, knowing I could answer too, but something held me back.

And then I noticed something—no one expected me to speak.

Not the teacher, not my classmates. No one turned my way. It was as if, in their minds, I had already decided to be silent.

That's when it hit me.

I wasn't invisible because people ignored me. I was invisible because I had never given them a reason to see me.

And that terrified me.

The Beginning of the Lies

That night, I lay awake in bed, staring at the ceiling, my mind restless.

Was this it? Would I always just be there? The kind of person people forget after graduation? The one whose name they struggle to remember when looking back at old class photos?

I didn't want that.

I wanted to be remembered. I wanted people to talk about me, to laugh at my jokes, to turn to me in conversations. But how?

That's when I started noticing something—people weren't always interesting because of what they did. They were interesting because of how they talked about it.

The class clown didn't actually have the most exciting life—he just knew how to exaggerate the right parts. The popular students didn't always have the craziest experiences—they just made normal things sound extraordinary.

Maybe I could do that too. So, I started experimenting. It began with small things. Someone would talk about a trip, and I'd say, "Oh, I've been there too." Someone would mention a funny accident, and I'd twist a small moment from my life to make it sound bigger, funnier, more dramatic. And the strangest part?

It worked. For the first time, people actually seemed interested in what I had to say. They laughed at my stories, nodded along, and for the first time, I felt like I was part of the conversation instead of just someone listening from the sidelines.

It was intoxicating. That's when I realized something: People don't care about reality. They care about what sounds good.

The First Real Lies

At first, I convinced myself that I wasn't really lying. I was just... improving the truth. Making it sound better. More engaging. More memorable.

But slowly, those small exaggerations turned into something bigger.

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And for a while, it felt good.

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So I kept going.

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CHAPTER :-3

Living a Lie

The Lies Get Bigger

The first time I truly lied, I felt a rush of excitement.

It wasn't like my usual exaggerations, where I took a normal event and made it sound bigger. This time, it was a complete fabrication—something that had never happened at all.

I don't remember exactly how it started. Maybe someone was talking about their passion for music, and I blurted out, "Yeah, I play too." Maybe someone mentioned their band, and I said, "I've performed a few times, nothing major."

It was a reflex—one that even surprised me.

But instead of questioning me, they got excited. Their eyes lit up.

"That's awesome! What instrument do you play?"

I hesitated for only a second.

"Guitar," I said confidently.

The moment the words left my mouth, I knew there was no going back.

For a second, I felt a flicker of fear. What if they asked me to play? What if they found out I was lying? But then, just as quickly, that fear was drowned out by something else—validation.

"Dude, that's so cool!"

"You should jam with us sometime!"

I smiled, nodded, acted casual. I had no idea how to play a single chord. But in that moment, none of that mattered.

Because they believed me. And in their eyes, I wasn't just some guy in the background anymore. I was interesting. That feeling was addictive.

Maintaining the Illusion

At first, I thought I'd only have to lie once. But it wasn't that simple. The moment I told one lie, I had to tell another to support it. Then another. And another.

People started asking questions.

"What kind of music do you play?"

"How long have you been playing?"

"You have to show us something one day!"

I had to think fast. I couldn't afford to slip up.

"Oh, I mostly play rock, but I'm trying out jazz too."

"I've been playing for a few years, but I don't really perform much."

"Yeah, I'll play for you guys sometime! My guitar's at home right now."

It became a game—one where I had to stay ahead of the truth. I started watching YouTube videos about guitars, just in case someone asked me a technical question. I memorized famous song names so I could pretend I knew them. But I also had to be careful. If I knew too much, people might ask me to play. If I knew too little, they might realize I was lying. So, I stayed in the middle—knowing just enough to sound convincing but never enough to be tested.

It worked. Until one day, someone asked the question I had been dreading:

"Hey, man, play something for us!"

My heart raced.

I forced a casual laugh. "Ah, I wish I could, but I don't have my guitar with me."

"No problem, I have one!" someone said.

Panic shot through me.

I needed an excuse. Fast.

"Actually, my wrist's been hurting a bit. I don't want to strain it," I said, shaking my hand for effect.

They nodded in understanding. Crisis averted.

But that moment left me shaken.

How much longer could I keep this up?

The Fear of Getting Caught

The deeper I went, the harder it became to stop.

I wasn't just a musician anymore—I had started lying about other things too.

If someone talked about sports, I'd say I had played for my school team once.

If someone mentioned travel, I'd casually talk about visiting places I had never been to.

It wasn't just about impressing people anymore. It was about protecting the identity I had created.

The scariest part?

Even I started believing my own lies.

Sometimes, I'd catch myself thinking back on a fake story and momentarily forgetting it wasn't real. It felt like I had lived it. My brain had rewritten my past to match the version of myself I had presented to others.

But there was always that nagging fear—What if someone found out?

What if one day, someone called me out? What if I was exposed in front of everyone?

That thought haunted me.

I started avoiding situations where my lies might be tested. If someone invited me to play music, I'd make an excuse. If someone talked about a trip I "went on," I'd steer the conversation away.

But I knew, deep down, that I was running on borrowed time.

Sooner or later, the truth always comes out.

And I wasn't ready for what would happen when it did.

CHAPTER :-4

Lost in My Own Lies

The Weight of Pretending

Lying is easy.

At least, that's what I thought in the beginning. Just say something that sounds believable, and people accept it. Simple.

But the problem wasn't telling the lie. It was keeping up with it.

The deeper I went, the more exhausting it became.

I had to remember every detail of the things I had said. What instrument I played, what my "favorite" song was, how long I had "been playing." If I slipped up even once, the whole illusion could fall apart.

It was like juggling, except instead of balls, I was juggling versions of myself.

And the worst part?

I had no idea who the real me was anymore.

There were moments where I caught myself wondering—if I had never started lying, would anyone have even cared about me? Would people still have found me interesting?

That thought scared me more than anything.

Because I knew the answer.

Without my lies, I was no one.

The Cost of the Lies

There was a strange side effect to lying—it made real experiences feel fake.

I remember sitting in a group, laughing at someone's joke, and suddenly wondering—Am I actually enjoying this, or am I just pretending?

When people praised me for something, I questioned if I even deserved it.

Even when I made real memories, I felt disconnected from them—because I had spent so long fabricating stories that I forgot what reality even felt like.

And then came the worst realization. I wasn't just lying to others anymore. I was lying to myself.

There were moments when I looked in the mirror and didn't recognize the person staring back at me. I had spent so much time shaping this "better" version of myself that I had no idea who I truly was anymore.

And yet, I couldn't stop.

Because if I did—if I suddenly dropped the act—people would notice.

And I wasn't sure I was ready to face that.

The Moment of Doubt

One night, I was sitting in my room, scrolling through social media, when I saw a post that stopped me cold.

It was a video of someone playing guitar—flawlessly, effortlessly. And for the first time, I felt something different. Not admiration. Not jealousy.

Just... emptiness.

I had spent so long pretending to be someone who could do this, but what had I actually achieved? Nothing. If I had actually learned to play when I first told the lie, I would have been decent by now. But I didn't. Instead, I spent all that time keeping up appearances, making sure no one found out the truth. I thought back to all the moments I had dodged, all the excuses I had made.

All the time I had wasted.

And suddenly, the weight of it all hit me at once. I had spent months living as a version of myself that didn't exist. And for what? A few moments of attention? Some compliments that weren't even real?

I put my phone down, closed my eyes, and let out a shaky breath. For the first time since this all started, I asked myself:

"What am I doing?"

And for the first time, I didn't have an answer.

CHAPTER :-5

The Breaking Point

A Moment of Realization

The night I questioned everything, I barely slept.

I lay in bed, staring at the ceiling, my mind racing. Every moment of my life over the past year replayed like a movie. The lies. The fake stories. The way people looked at me when I spoke, believing in a version of me that didn't exist.

And I wondered—if I stopped lying today, would anyone still care about me?

The thought haunted me.

I grabbed my phone and scrolled through my chats. There were conversations filled with laughter, with jokes, with compliments. But as I read them again, something felt different.

None of them were real.

They weren't talking to me. They were talking to the person I had created.

I thought about my friends. The ones who admired me for my so-called musical skills. The ones who thought I had traveled to places I had never even seen. Would they still want to be around me if they knew the truth?

For the first time, I felt completely alone.

Because no one in my life truly knew me.

Losing Myself

I got up and walked to the mirror, staring at my reflection.

I had spent so much time building this version of myself that I had no idea who I actually was anymore.

What were my real interests?
What was I actually good at?
What did I truly enjoy doing?

I didn't know.

Because I had spent every moment crafting a fake story instead of living my own.

I sat on my bed, my head in my hands, the weight of it all crushing me.

What had I gained from all this?

Attention? Yes.

Validation? Maybe.

But happiness?

No.

If anything, I felt more lost than ever.

I thought about what had started it all—my fear of being ordinary. My fear of blending in. My fear of not being remembered.

But in chasing something extraordinary, I had lost everything real about myself.

And for what?

For strangers' approval? For people who wouldn't even matter in a few years?

Then another thought hit me—my parents.

The people who had always been there for me. The people who never asked me to be famous, or popular, or admired.

The only thing they ever wanted was for me to be happy.

The Breaking Point

That was the moment something inside me changed. I was done pretending. I didn't want to live like this anymore. I didn't want to waste more time trying to impress people with things that weren't even real. But where did I even start? How do you go back to being yourself when you don't even know who that is anymore?

I grabbed a notebook and wrote down a simple question: "What do I actually want?"

Not what sounds good. Not what will impress people. Not what makes me look cool. Just what I truly wanted. And for the first time, I didn't have to lie. I wanted to stop feeling like a fraud. I wanted to actually learn the things I had pretended to know.

I wanted to rebuild myself from the ground up. It wouldn't be easy. I knew that. But for the first time in a long time, I felt something I hadn't felt before.

Hope.

CHAPTER :-6

Choosing to Be Real

Picking Up an Instrument for Real

The day after my realization, I did something I had avoided for months.

I walked into a music store.

The moment I stepped inside, I felt a wave of nervousness. Rows of guitars lined the walls, shining under the store lights. The soft hum of a piano played from a speaker somewhere in the back. A couple of people were testing out instruments, their fingers moving effortlessly over the strings and keys.

I swallowed hard.

This was it. No more pretending. No more excuses. If I wanted to fix what I had broken, I had to start here.

I walked up to the counter, where a man with a graying beard and kind eyes looked up from his work.

"Can I help you?" he asked.

I hesitated for only a second before speaking.

"I... I want to learn how to play the guitar."

The words felt strange coming out of my mouth. Not "I play the guitar." Not "I've performed before." Just the truth. The man nodded, smiling. "Great! Are you looking for an acoustic or an electric?"

I blinked. I had no idea.

"Uh... acoustic, I guess?"

He chuckled, pulling a basic wooden guitar from the rack and handing it to me.

"Here, try holding this one."

I took it carefully, my fingers awkwardly wrapping around the neck. It felt heavier than I expected, and the strings pressed against my skin uncomfortably.

For the first time, I felt real.

Not perfect. Not impressive. Just real.

And for once, that was enough.

Rebuilding Myself

That night, I sat in my room, staring at the guitar. I had spent so long pretending to play that now, actually holding one, I felt like a fraud. I placed my fingers on the strings, trying to strum like I had seen in countless videos. The sound that came out was horrible—harsh, uneven, completely wrong. I sighed. This is going to take forever.

My brain immediately tried to come up with an excuse. Maybe I don't need to do this. Maybe I can just say I lost interest. But no. That was the old me talking. I had spent so much time chasing shortcuts, looking for ways to make people believe in an illusion. But this wasn't about them anymore.

This was about me. So, I tried again. And again. And again. My fingers hurt. The sound was still awful. But I didn't stop. Because for the first time in a long time, I wasn't doing something to impress anyone.

I was doing it because I wanted to. And that made all the difference.

The Small Changes That Mattered

As the weeks passed, I started making more changes. I didn't announce it. I didn't tell people, "Hey, I'm fixing my life now." I just... started being different. I focused on my studies—not because I wanted to be a topper, but because I wanted to actually understand things. I stopped trying to lead conversations with fake stories. If I didn't have anything interesting to say, I just listened. And surprisingly, people still talked to me. Some didn't notice the change. Some probably didn't care. But the ones who mattered?

They stayed. One of my friends, someone who had always been there, even when I was deep in my lies, noticed it first. "You've been kinda different lately," she said one afternoon. I shrugged. "Yeah, I guess." "I like it." That simple sentence meant more to me than all the fake admiration I had ever received. Because this time, they weren't liking the person I pretended to be. They were liking me. And for the first time, that was enough.

CHAPTER :-7

Losing Fake Friends, Finding Real Ones

Who Stayed and Who Left

The funny thing about change is that not everyone is happy about it. When I stopped lying, when I stopped playing the part of someone more interesting than I was, I noticed something strange.

Some people—the ones who once laughed at my stories, who once admired the version of me I had created—started drifting away.

It wasn't sudden. No one confronted me or called me out. But the conversations got shorter. The invites stopped coming. The messages I once received regularly started fading.

At first, I wondered if it was my fault. Maybe I had become boring. Maybe, without my fake stories, I wasn't worth talking to anymore. But then I realized something—these were the same people who only liked the version of me that wasn't real. And if they didn't like the real me? Then maybe they were never my friends to begin with.

The Ones Who Saw Through Me

Not everyone left.

There were some people—the ones who had been there before I started lying—who noticed my change, but instead of pulling away, they stayed.

One afternoon, I was sitting outside, quietly strumming my guitar—badly, of course. My fingers still fumbled, my chords were off, but for once, I didn't care.

A friend sat beside me, listening. After a while, she spoke.

"You actually picked it up, huh?"

I nodded, still focusing on the strings. "Yeah. Figured it was about time I learned for real." She was silent for a moment before saying something that made me pause.

"I always knew you were lying, you know."

I looked at her, my fingers freezing on the fretboard.

"What?"

"About the music thing. About some other stuff, too," she said, shrugging. "It was kinda obvious. But I figured you'd stop when you were ready."

I stared at her, expecting some kind of judgment. Some disappointment. But there was none.

"Why didn't you ever say anything?" I asked.

"Because I knew that wasn't really you."

I didn't know what to say to that.

For the longest time, I had believed that I had to create an entirely different version of myself for people to like me. But sitting there, hearing those words from someone who had stayed despite my lies, I realized something.

Maybe the real me was worth knowing after all.

What Real Friendship Looks Like

I won't lie and say everything became perfect after that. It didn't.

There were still moments when I wanted to exaggerate things, when I wanted to make myself seem more interesting. Old habits don't disappear overnight.

But this time, I caught myself. This time, I reminded myself that I didn't need to impress people to be worth something.

And slowly, things started to change.

The fake friends faded, but the real ones?

They stayed.

Not because I was the funniest. Not because I was the most talented. Not because I had the best stories.

But because I was me.

And for the first time, that felt like enough.

CHAPTER :-8

Success on My Own Terms

Redefining Success

For the longest time, I thought success meant being admired.

I thought it meant being the funniest person in the room, the most interesting one, the one people talked about. I thought success was about standing out, about making people remember you.

But the truth is, I had spent so much time trying to be successful that I never actually did anything that mattered. I wasn't great at music. I wasn't excelling in academics. I wasn't working toward any real goal.

I had spent all my time creating the illusion of success instead of actually achieving it. So, I asked myself—What do I really want?

Not what would impress people.
Not what would make me look good.
Not what would get me attention.
Just what I truly wanted for myself.
And the answer was simple:
I wanted to be better. Not for anyone else, but for me.

The Effort That Mattered

I started small.

I set a goal to actually learn guitar—not to impress anyone, but because I genuinely wanted to. Every day, I practiced, even when my fingers hurt, even when the chords sounded terrible.

I focused on my studies—not because I wanted to be a topper, but because I wanted to prove to myself that I was capable of more than just getting by.

And most importantly, I stopped chasing attention.

I stopped feeling the need to make everything sound more exciting than it was. If I had a boring day, I said so. If I didn't know something, I admitted it.

And strangely? Nothing bad happened.

The people who mattered didn't suddenly disappear.

They didn't care if I wasn't extraordinary. They just cared that I was real.

And for the first time, I cared more about what I thought of myself than what others did.

That was when I realized—this was success.

Not being admired.

Not being envied.

Not being the center of attention.

But simply becoming better than I was yesterday.

Pride in My Parents' Eyes

One afternoon, I was sitting at the dining table, going through my notes, when my mom walked in.

She glanced at my books, then at me.

"You've been studying a lot lately," she said.

I shrugged. "Yeah, just trying to stay on top of things."

—

She nodded, smiling. Then she said something I hadn't expected.

"I'm proud of you."

I blinked. "Why?"

"Because you're actually trying now."

It was such a simple sentence. But it meant more than any compliment I had ever received.

Because for the first time, someone wasn't proud of the image I had created.

They were proud of me.

And that was worth more than all the fake attention I had ever chased.

CHAPTER :-9

A Message to the Reader

You Don't Need
to Fake It

If you've ever felt invisible, I understand.

If you've ever felt like you weren't special enough, interesting enough, or important enough—I know exactly what that feels like.

For so long, I thought the only way to matter was to pretend to be something more. I thought I had to build a version of myself that people would admire.

And for a while, it worked.

But let me tell you something—the attention you get from pretending never lasts.

One day, the lies catch up. One day, you realize that none of it is real. And the worst part? You lose yourself in the process.

I spent so much time trying to impress people who didn't truly care about me.

But in the end, it wasn't admiration or attention that made me feel fulfilled.

It was being real.

Being okay with who I actually was.

And if you're struggling with that—if you feel like you're not enough just as you are—I want you to know this:

You don't have to pretend.

The right people, the ones who truly matter, will like you for who you are.

And that's worth more than any lie will ever give you.

Becoming Your
True Self

I won't say that changing is easy.

It's not.

There were days I wanted to go back. Days I wanted to fall into old habits, to stretch the truth just a little bit, to make my life sound more exciting than it was.

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But every time I did, I reminded myself of one thing—I deserve to be accepted for who I actually am.

And so do you.

If you feel like you're not interesting enough, ask yourself—interesting to whom?

If you feel like you need to lie to fit in, ask yourself—is this really the kind of person I want to be?

Because the truth is, success isn't about being admired. It's not about standing out. It's not about making sure people remember your name.

Success is about being happy with yourself.

And you can't do that if you're always pretending to be someone else.

So, if you take anything from this book, let it be this:

You are enough.

Not the version of you that's exaggerated. Not the version of you that's built to impress others.

Just you.

And if you can accept that, if you can be okay with who you are, then you've already won.

Because in the end, the only person you truly need to impress is yourself

“We spend so much time trying to be seen that we forget to be real. But the truth is, you don’t need to be extraordinary to matter. You just need to be yourself.”

– Finding Myself in the Lies

