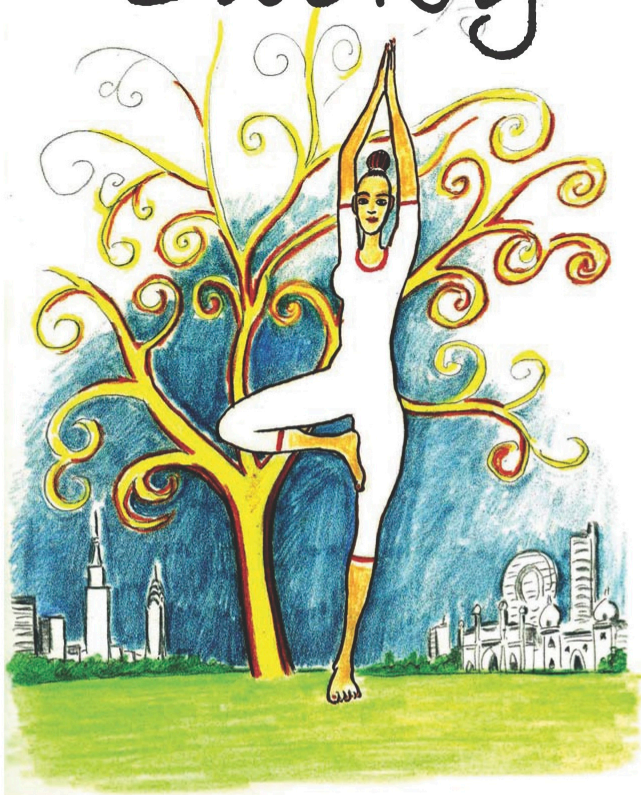


SEQUEL TO THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER *LUCKY EVERYDAY*

# A Star Called Lucky



**BAPSY JAIN**

# A STAR CALLED LUCKY

SEQUEL TO THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER *LUCKY EVERYDAY*

## **BAPSY JAIN**

is a best-selling author, educator and entrepreneur, noted for the international success of her debut novel, *Lucky Everyday*.



---

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

---



---

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



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

## CHAPTER 7

6 a.m. The phone rang. *Where am I?* Lucky woke, still dressed from the day before. She had been deep into a dream about India. She was at the Hanging Gardens in Mumbai, with Shanti, but it wasn't the Hanging Gardens. There was the hill and the path and the bench where they met, but the path had led around the park and then into a building in which there was a swamp. Lucky was terrified of the dark, shadowed water—or, more precisely, of what might lurk below its surface. Shanti was not afraid of the water at all. She sprang from lotus to lotus, landing on the bright pink flowers without causing so much as a ripple. Lucky wanted to call out to her, but no words came. She wanted to run after her, but her feet felt weighed down, as if she were dragging iron bars through the mud. Shanti was almost across the pond. She turned, pirouetting on one toe like a ballerina, and beckoned Lucky on. "Travel light! You're carrying too much of a burden."

*What burden?* Lucky wondered. The phone rang again. *Where am I?* She found the receiver. "Hello."

Collette. "You didn't call me," she said.

"What time is it?"

"Six a.m."

"Why on earth are you calling me at this hour?"

"It's important, with a capital M."

"Are you all right? Where's your mother? Does she know you're calling me?"

"I'm fine. Mom's in bed with her boyfriend—but I'm not supposed to know. I'll have to act like I've gone to school today so she can sneak him out. And she doesn't know I'm calling. Call me back from a pay phone right away, okay? I gotta talk to you before they get up."

"Okay, Sweetie." Lucky said. She sighed. "I have to get up and get dressed first."

6:05 a.m. Lucky staggered into the bathroom and turned on the water in the tub to warm it up. She was greeted by a heavy spray of cold water. Some joker had pointed the showerhead over the side. She shut her eyes. She was dripping wet and freezing cold. *At least I'm awake now.* She showered, patted on a little makeup—not too much for the first day in a new office, dried her hair, then stood in front of her suitcase and looked at her clothes. *What the heck was I thinking when I packed?*

In her mind, she heard Shanti, "You weren't thinking, and that's the problem. Mindful in the little things. What were you doing?"

Lucky had been thinking about Sean and Maria and Amay and Collette. Anything but the task at hand, which should have been, *What do I wear on the first day of work in a new office in Washington freakin' DC?* Laid out in the suitcase were all of what Lucky called her *lawyer clothes*: severe pants suits in military grays and greens and browns. She sighed. *Someday, I'm going to have a job where I can wear whatever I want to work.* Almost immediately she heard Shanti's voice, "Be careful what you ask for—you might get it."

Downstairs, the coffee shop was open. Fifteen bucks for a sticky cheese omelet, some dry hash browns, and a cold cup of coffee that managed to be both bitter and weak at the same time. "Do you have a pay phone?" Lucky asked the waitress.

"In the bar," she replied.

The bar was shut, a padlocked iron gate separating it from the hotel lobby. She asked the receptionist, "What time does the bar open?"

## A STAR CALLED LUCKY

The receptionist looked at Lucky. "It's six thirty, ma'am. Did you try the minibar in your room, or does it need to be restocked?"

*Minibar?* Lucky scowled. "I don't need a *drink*. I'm looking for a *pay phone*. The waitress said there's a pay phone in the bar."

"Oh, sure. A pay phone. I should have known. Well, the bar doesn't open until eleven, but there are courtesy phones down the hall by the elevators, or you can make free local calls from your room. Long distance is a bit pricey, though. You'd be better off using your cell. You do have a cell, don't you?"

"Forget it," Lucky said. "I'll find one outside." But there were none between the hotel and the office. She walked on and, realizing she had found the office, sighed as she stepped toward the gate. She would try again later.

For most of the morning, Lucky pored over Coleman's Lobsang file, having asked for time to update herself that morning before she met with the team for discussions. Coleman had made this file available for the team, along with some other findings stamped "strictly classified, locked, password needed." There was a lot of background in the file, none of which, so far as Lucky could see, was sensitive. Much of it consisted of newspaper clippings.

The Tibetan diaspora. Primary school in McLeod Ganj. Secondary school on a scholarship to British International School in New Delhi. University College of London. Medical school at Oxford. *Oxford?* Lucky leaned back in her chair. This did not compute. A man who purportedly eschewed all technology sporting a medical degree from one of the finest — and most technically advanced — universities in the world? A man reputed to be dealing in — dare she say — *magic* mushrooms?

There were, as Coleman said, some old photos. Outdated. Lobsang in the back row of a group photo with a gaggle of grinning scholarship recipients. A blurry, white-lab-coated Lobsang squinting into a microscope. One photo was of another student — Lobsang was just caught in the back, slightly out of focus. Here he was in jeans and a Grateful Dead tee-shirt, his hair grown long and swept back over his shoulders, standing with a blond girl outside of what

could only be Royal Albert Hall, in the rain. And here was an earnest-looking Lobsang in glasses, standing alone, framed in a doorway of what might have been a library or a dorm. He was short, his head large and square, his hands swinging awkwardly by his side. Lucky stared into the photo displayed on her computer screen. There was something familiar about Lobsang's expression. The narrowing of the eyebrows, the tight mouth, the light in his eyes, the way he cocked his head slightly to one side. He looked like he was about to say something important, something that was weighing on his mind. Something he had thought about for a long time. He looked like he was about to say, "Goodbye."

And evidently, he did, for there were no more photos. Not one in thirty-one years. Not even a drawing until a man named Somasundaram caught dengue fever in Hubli — *allegedly*.

Lucky leafed through Coleman's research, looking at what he had done, and wondering what he might have missed. Medical colleges in India and Tibet. What had he done there? There were satellite images of India dotted with possible sightings or the locations of possible acquaintances. Shipping records for medical supplies. Excerpts from telephone conversations and e-mails of suspected associates, although not one of them mentioned Lobsang by name. Where did all of this stuff come from? And how did the U.S. government have that much clout? There were even sections about suspected Chinese activity. None of it was especially useful. *If they listened to my phone conversations, and if they read my e-mails, what might they infer about me?* Lucky wondered. *If you're looking to find the Virgin on a tortilla, then sooner or later you'll find the Virgin on a tortilla.*

But the difficult thing — and the point Lucky kept coming back to — was the idea of how a man with an aversion to technology would act. That thought intrigued her. It had to narrow down his options.

Lucky folded her hands and rested her chin on her knuckles. She thought about the Monty Hall problem. If you knew where someone *wasn't*, you increased the odds of knowing where they were. Really, the odds were best if you looked where he had never been and where

## A STAR CALLED LUCKY

nobody thought he was. Lucky sat bolt upright. She looked at the map. What was the *least* likely place for him to be? In Mumbai? At first, she had dismissed the idea, but maybe it had merit after all. Coleman had said Lobsang was based mainly in Mumbai. It was easy to hide in Mumbai, and everyone seemed to know somebody there. It would be easy to hide in a densely populated area — and Mumbai certainly was that. Somehow, though, she felt he was not in Mumbai. Too much technology. She slumped, defeated, and thinking of Shanti saying, “When the world goes upside down, you need to stand on your head.” Instead, Lucky went to lunch.

When she returned, she found Coleman sitting on her desk, considering the volume of Whitman.

“Hello...Cleviss.”

“Afternoon, Boyce.” Coleman replied. He did not look up. “Knew you were eccentric. Didn’t think you were subversive.”

“You’re kidding me?”

“I hear the carpenter singing. The mason singing, the boatman singing, the woodcutter singing. Singing with open mouths their strong, melodious songs. Tell me, Boyce, have you ever heard anyone sing *without* their mouth open?”

She looked up, puzzled.

“Didn’t think so. Some editor should have struck that line.”

“I like poetry,” Lucky replied. “Mark it down as one of my vices. And if I wasn’t subversive you wouldn’t have hired me.”

“Done and done. And you have no idea how right you are about that. Whitman was gay, did you know that? He and his robust young friends partying through the night. You know why people read books, Boyce?”

“To learn?”

“There you go being idealistic again. And naïve. Have to wean you off that. Whitman knew. Try this one.” She turned back a few pages. “*I myself often think I know little or nothing of my real life*. There. Ignorance. That’s why people read, Boyce. They are ignorant of their real life. Do you think books can make people sing, Boyce?”

“I suppose you’re going to tell me no.”



“Precisely. You were going to argue that books could teach you music, but that’s not the same thing. You know what makes people sing? Happiness? Contentment? That’s a lot of crap. What was it Maya Angelou wrote? *Why does the caged bird sing?* Birds sing to attract mates. And people? People sing because they are blissfully ignorant.”

“Perhaps people sing for different reasons?”

Coleman frowned, then looked back at the book. He idly flipped pages. “We make people sing, Boyce. You and I. The leaders of this sorry pack. We can make them happy and we can make them sad. We can make them work like bees in a hive or riot in the streets in protest. And the beauty of it all is that we yank the chains and they think it’s their idea. Have you heard this one?

To find a new unthought of nonchalance with the best of  
Nature!

To have the gag remov’d from one’s mouth! To escape  
utterly from others’ anchors and holds!

“What do you make of that — A new un-thought? What the hell is that?”

“He said ‘unthought-of.’ He was talking about the nonchalance —”

“Or this....”

To have the feeling to-day or any day I am sufficient as I  
am.

O something unprov’d! something in a trance!

“Something in a trance? He’s got to be mad! Boyce! Hear this one....”

To drive free! to love free! to dash reckless and dangerous!

To court destruction with taunts, with invitations!

## A STAR CALLED LUCKY

“To drive free! To love! To dash reckless! To court destruction!  
He was a sadist, of sorts.”

To feed the remainder of life with one hour of fullness and  
freedom!

With one brief hour of madness and joy.

“To feed the remainder of life with one brief hour of fullness and  
freedom! With one hour of madness and joy! Was the man  
prescient, or what, Boyce?”

“I find it rather amusing.”

“Amusing? In what way?”

“In the same way that all fanatics are amusing. Nature has no  
power —”

“Who said anything about nature, Boyce? He’s talking about  
*television*. Of course *nature* can’t satisfy our demands. That’s why  
men invented technology. If nature were all that great, we’d still be  
running around in skins and eating whatever could be dug, picked,  
snared, clubbed, or shot with a bow and arrow. Man and machine  
were made for each other. To cast off this husk of a body. Why, in  
one hour of television you can have the experience of a lifetime.  
Think of it, Boyce, the loser on the street — Whitman’s fishermen  
and housewives and stonecutters and whatnot — for an hour they  
can be anybody! They can sleep with impossibly beautiful people,  
visit exotic places, fly, dream, live! Thoreau said, ‘Most men lead  
lives of quiet desperation.’ We, Boyce, the *upper* crust, we relieve  
them of their misery. We’ve done more for mankind in the past fifty  
years than was done in all the preceding millennia. How can real-life  
compare with what we offer? Ordinary life is — or was — as  
Shakespeare would say, ‘a fishmonger’s wife.’ We offer sex with a  
supermodel.”

Lucky looked out the window.

As if he read her mind, Coleman got up and walked around the  
desk. “People are happy because of us.” He licked his lips. “We give  
them food and shelter and entertainment. What else is there? For a

few hours, they can be anybody. Indiana Jones! Luke Skywalker! Batman! Superman! Think of it! A magic carpet ride to anywhere, for free, right in the comfort of their homes! You wouldn't want to mess with that, would you, Boyce?" There was a trace of menace in his voice. Coleman snapped the book shut.

"No sir," she said.

"Yes, I know all about you. And your prison work, your yoga, your rather endearing ability to know a little bit about everything. And nothing at all about what really matters."

"What matters?"

"Yes." Coleman stood up and went to the window. "What matters? How long has television been around, Boyce?"

"Farnsworth, 1927."

"BBC began broadcasting in 1937. NBC in 1939. If we allow, say, twenty years for the diffusion of the technology to reach a saturation level at which it could have a real impact, then in the West we have had, say, five or six generations that have grown up on it."

"That sounds about right."

"What do you know about McClintock's Constant?"

"He was a molecular biologist."

"She. *She* postulated that knowledge becomes genetically encoded in seventeen generations. Fruit flies taught for seventeen generations will spontaneously acquire that behavior without training in the eighteenth. Knowledge itself can act as a kind of *transposon*."

"A what?"

"A transposon — a gene that jumps around in DNA. Brings me back to the time when I was a boy graduating from high school."

"And your point is?"

"You have a colorful past, Miss Boyce. A climber. A shark in business. A society marriage. A few scrapes with the law. Perhaps I've misjudged you."

Lucky looked out the window, then back at Coleman. "How so?"

"Have you any interest in politics, Boyce?"

"I suppose everybody has thought about running for office."

## A STAR CALLED LUCKY

"I'm not talking about running for office," Coleman snapped. "Any jackass can run for office. I'm talking about *politics*. Real politics, Boyce, played the old-fashioned way."

"And which way is that?"

"Would you lie to the press if I asked you to?" Lucky started to speak but Coleman held up his hand. "If I said it was important. If I said it was an issue of national security?"

"No sir."

"Would you plant an illegal wiretap?"

Lucky shook her head.

"Would you hack into someone's computer?"

"No sir."

"Would you plant evidence on a man to advance your cause and hurt his? If you knew your cause to be just?"

"Wouldn't that go against —"

"Fair play? That's what I mean, Boyce. When it comes to causes, there is no fair play. Would you sleep with a man to gain his confidence?"

Lucky's eyes bulged. She stammered, "Of...of...of course not."

"Would you kill a man without judicial review if he was a clear and present threat to your nation?"

Lucky hesitated.

"That's what I wanted to know," Coleman said. "If you would act decisively for a cause and *without hesitation*."

Lucky's eyes were suddenly dry and irritated. She blinked, but no moisture came. She said, "In Vietnam, in 1968, a U.S. Army Major, Phil Cannella, supposedly told a reporter that we had to destroy the village of Ben Tre in order to save it. Isn't that what you are asking? That I should destroy the values I hold dear in order to save them for others? What sense does that make?"

Coleman smiled. "According to McClintock, we have twelve generations to go before people stop thinking for themselves entirely. Won't that be marvelous? Think about it. There will be a ruling class, an *intelligentsia* to think for them. They will rule benevolently, but firmly. Everyone will be better off. *Especially*,

those at the top of the food chain. In politics, Boyce, there are two kinds of people. Those who play the game and those who read the rules. Those with their noses in the rule book are generally taken for fools and left in the dust, or worse. Are you certain you don't want to play the game?"

"Is this some sort of a joke?" Lucky asked.

Coleman smiled. "Of course it's a joke. Just a little test of integrity I give all my people. Don't worry, you've passed." He stood up to leave, crossed the office, but paused at the door. "People have been praying for world peace for generations," he said. "Only — until now, we never understood how to make that happen. Once people are properly domesticated, then and only then will we have world peace. I'd like to think that my great-great-great-something-or-others might grow up in that kind of world. How about you?"

"I can't even visualize that," Lucky said.

Coleman shook his head. "Work on that. You have to be well prepared for the meeting this afternoon."

When he was gone, Lucky fixed a cup of chai and went to the window. The day was hot and humid, the air hazy. Across the Potomac was Arlington, and to the south, Alexandria. This was all Civil War country. Strange, Lucky thought, to think of Americans fighting each other, much as Indians did during the days following the Partition. More than half a million men died in that war. Mostly, Lucky noted, of disease.

She returned to her desk and opened the volume of Sun Tzu. Choosing a page at random, she read: *Good warriors cause others to come to them. They do not go to others.* Now, there was a possibility that nobody had seriously considered. Maybe there was a way — besides a disease or a poison or necessary piece of machinery — maybe there was a way to make Lobsang come forward, come up for air, come to them with a request. *Wouldn't that be a corker?* he thought. But what would he want?

The way to reach Lobsang was to find out what he wanted. But what does a man who has renounced the world want? That, Lucky realized, was the one thing Coleman had never said: What does this

## A STAR CALLED LUCKY

Lobsang want? He had something of great value, and he had to know that. Why, then, wouldn't he share it with the world? Wasn't that what any normal person would do?

Lucky opened a file on psychological forensics—case studies as varied as Jack the Ripper, D.B. Cooper, Shakespeare, Che Guevara, Joan of Arc, and Saddam Hussein. There were many enigmatic people whose motives were easier seen posthumously than while they were alive. All the deduction required was certain basic facts from which conflicting possibilities could be sorted out. These were:

1. Circumstances of birth
2. Family life
3. Physical health
4. Education
5. Employment
6. Life experiences

The date of birth told you someone's age, and the maternal and paternal details of the circumstances of birth provided information on the environment the child would have been likely subjected to — as well as the issues they would have had to confront during their formative years. Age progression was unavoidable, and although class could change, there were certain *facts* of class, which tended to leave signatures — habits of speech, diet, clothing, even habits of thought. Not to mention the number of siblings and the order of birth.

Physical health also said a great deal about a person's potential for action. For example, some historians' claim that Joan of Arc had to be a man was based on the assumption that no woman could ride, wield a sword, or command soldiers, as Joan had. On the other hand, there was nothing concrete to rule out that Joan was a woman — provided that she was in excellent health. Thus, overall health was an important key to understanding behavior.

Education. Almost all those who contended that Shakespeare could not have written Shakespeare did so on the grounds that his education was not considered sufficient to support such an ambitious body of work. On its surface, this was a good argument. But when one considered other factors, and the number of factual and historical errors in Shakespeare's work, the reverse became evident. It was not his education that enabled his work but his upbringing and life's experiences. In reality, his lack of advanced education *hindered* his work, as the upper class almost always appeals to an innate superiority when attempting to discredit upstart rivals from the lower classes.

Employment. That was easy to trace for any individual.

The last of the six factors was life experience. Would it be possible to understand Mother Teresa or Che Guevara or Mahatma Gandhi without understanding the events that triggered their devotion to their causes? Sleuths cited military experience as a factor in D.B. Cooper's selection of parachutes. But the real question — the one no one could answer — was: what prompted a man to risk his life for a suitcase full of \$100 bills? Was he trying, as some argued, to fund a revolutionary organization? By the same token, Gandhi, who was born into a wealthy family, renounced wealth as a *hindrance* to his idealistic goals. Thus, opposite behaviors might be triggered by similar events. What was necessary was to understand how the person interpreted those events in relation to his or her own life experiences.

It was not what was known about people that created these mysteries, but rather, what was not known about them. And the means of inferring what was not clear was what fascinated Lucky.

"Who," she said out loud, "am I looking for?"

Lucky reviewed what was known about Lobsang.

Birth: Tibet. Age, estimated 52 years.

Family: Fled Lhasa. Raised as a refugee. Alienation?

Disaffection? Outrage?

## A STAR CALLED LUCKY

Physical health: Presumed excellent. Past injury to leg or hip?

Education: Non-traditional. Religious. Medical college in England.

Employment: Charity. Hobbies ???

Life experiences. Little known?

He's a Buddhist monk who has renounced the world as an illusion. Where would he be? Would he be in Mumbai? Did that make any sense?

Lucky went to her computer and brought up her address book. She had a list of friends and suppliers from her days in Mumbai and from Lockwood Enterprises in New York. She shot off e-mails to all her contacts in Mumbai describing Lobsang and enclosing two snapshots of him, one as a student in London and the other the sketch they had. Coleman might not be very pleased, this being "strictly confidential," but what the heck, she reckoned. It was better than sitting and dreaming about him and where he could be.

At the afternoon staff meeting, Coleman was insistent in hearing what progress had been made toward finding Lobsang. He glared at Lucky.

"It is less efficient," Lucky said in defense, "for us to look for him than to create conditions in which he will look for us."

Her observation provoked a round of sniggers from the staffers gathered around the table. Even Coleman was taken aback. "What the hell am I paying you for?" he asked. "You're not an accountant anymore. Resources are not the problem. We have all the resources in the free world at our disposal."

"It takes years to find the major leaders of drug or terrorist outfits, even when we know a great deal about them. And when we succeeded, in most cases, it was through an act of betrayal by one of their lieutenants. Take Saddam Hussein, for example. One of his former lieutenants led to his capture. Not spies, not spy satellites, not hi-res photos and X-rays and infra-reds. And we knew a lot



about Saddam Hussein. We know next-to-nothing about Lobsang's recent past."

Coleman frowned. "He's a man, goddammit, and he puts his pants on one leg at a time."

"Actually," Lucky said, "he might not even wear pants."

Another round of laughter.

"What do you mean?"

"For all you know, he might dress in flowing white robes. Or a lungee. We really don't know what he wears."

"That's beside the point."

"No," Lucky said, "That's *precisely* the point. You're looking for a man and you don't know the first thing about him. What he wears. What he eats. What he might do for recreation."

"I don't care if he wears fishnet stockings and high heels, the point is that we are going to catch him, and damn soon, and your job is to work out how."

"What have you done so far?" Lucky asked.

"We've read everything he's written and we've analyzed the paper and the ink and the words. We've even taken DNA from skin samples we found on the page."

"Is it his DNA?"

Coleman shrugged. "Who knows? But we think he is using scribes—no two samples have been alike."

"All that, and you haven't got close enough to snap a photo."

"If we were close enough to snap a photo," Coleman said, "we'd have the key to immortality."

Lucky nodded. "Have you ever gone fishing?" she asked.

Coleman said, "Of course I have."

"What kind of fish?"

"Everything from green cutthroat trout to swordfish, why?"

"When you want to catch a fish, do you jump in the water and swim around with a knife? Do you spy on them from the sky? Or, do you use bait? Sun Tzu says, 'What causes opponents to come of their own accord is the prospect of gain.'"

## A STAR CALLED LUCKY

“Enough!” Coleman said. “I’m paying you for data: charts, graphs, maps, names, and places. And to quote Sun Tzu again, ‘Those skilled in defense hide in the deepest depths of the earth. Those skilled in attack maneuver in the highest heights of the skies.’ Lobsang is hiding while we soar.”

“He also said,” Lucky said, “that a wise governor does not keep his men in the field.”

Coleman looked incredulous. “Remember what I said, Boyce. If the troops do not obey, it is the fault of the officers. You’ll do what I tell you or your stint here will be shorter than either of us imagined. I have the feeling you are going to be working some long hours.”

As she trudged back to her office, Lucky thought, *This is a strange assignment.*