

Why does a flight attendant holding a nervous passenger's hand bring the airline more repeat bookings than a million-dollar campaign?

A SHORT MANIFESTO OF BRAND LITERATURE,
A NEW GENRE IN BRAND COMMUNICATION

JOSH NEWTON



Earthopia®

THE BRAND LITERATURE COMPANY

Earthopia.Co

Brand Literature: A Short Manifesto

INTRODUCING A NEW GENRE OF
BRAND COMMUNICATION CALLED
BRAND LITERATURE

J O S H N E W T O N

BRAND LITERATURE: A SHORT MANIFESTO

Introducing a new genre of brand communication called Brand Literature

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Earthopia® Editions

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For
Joseph Mitchell of The New Yorker
(1908 – 1996)
my writerly hero

Disclaimer

This book has true stories told through fiction and creative nonfiction. Names, identifying details, descriptions and likenesses have been changed or omitted to protect the privacy of those involved. Scenes and dialogue have been reconstructed and shaped for literary effect while remaining faithful to the true spirit of the event. This book is created to demonstrate the concept of Brand Literature™ for entertainment purpose.

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Why a flight attendant holding a nervous passenger's hand brings more repeat bookings than a million-dollar campaign: Welcome to the future of enduring brands— Brand Literature.

Let me be very honest with you. You spend a fortune to interrupt people. Every day, your target audience is subjected to a flood of digital noise, sponsored posts, and self-serving corporate boasts. No wonder they skip your videos and scroll past your banners. They even pay for plugins designed to block your messages.

Today, your average consumer knows when they are being sold to. And they are supremely bored by it. If you want to capture the most valuable and elusive commodity in modern business—human attention—you must stop persuading and start respecting. *You must give them something of good value before you ask.*

Every generation invents its own marketing language. Look at the progression: Print ads, telly commercials, corporate films, websites, blogs, content, social media, podcasts, reels, influencers.. Each arrived

with the promise of capturing attention. Each worked—for a while till social fatigue hit.

So the quick remedy came: short content. But we are forgetting something vital: you cannot cure a short attention span simply by making the content shorter. *The smarter solution is entertainment.* When you enjoy something, your attention span increases. Modern neuroscience proves it. Who doesn't love a good story? Are brands taking this seriously? Are they investing in telling good stories in an engaging way?

Almost every business is tired by digital ad spend and declining ROI due to ad-blockers and algorithm changes? But we are giving you an audience that actively *opts in* to spend hours and hours with a your brand's literature. Let your competitors fight for the teens scrolling on TikTok. We are going to engage with the high net worth adults who are your potential customers. Through entertaining and engaging books on brands, we are not pitching to a small niche. We are pitching to a multi-billion-dollar global *habit*.

Enter Brand Literature. It is not copywriting. It is not content factory production. It is not corporate storytelling disguised as journalism. It is not a 200-page advertisement. It is legitimate, penetrating literature—characters, emotional storytelling, and deep dives into human situations that are totally relatable—where the brand is a quiet facilitator and not a screaming protagonist. It does not exist to persuade. It exist to engage and entertain. It treats a business not merely as a collection of products and services, but as a living landscape of human experience. It looks at the audiences not as a room full of wallets, but as organic collaborators in building brands. This is what people expect and accept today. They want to play a valuable part in a brand's progress. They are willing to talk about the brands that excite them. Hence, your audiences deserve your full respect. And you got to earn theirs by respecting them.

What is Brand Literature?

Earthopia® shaped it as a commercial literary genre and defines it clearly: *Brand literature is pure literary prose that creatively captures powerful human experiences around a brand aimed at entertaining and engaging a variety of audiences.* It transforms the impact of a business into beautifully crafted narratives that stand on their own literary merit. A reader should enjoy the narrative even when the brand name stays hidden. Yes, that's an unusual standard in marketing. Hence, that's also its greatest strength.

People rarely recommend promotions to friends. They recommend well-written stories. They gift well-written books. They respect well-written essays. Literature occupies a different place in human memory because it asks for nothing and gives generously. A powerful story creates a relationship before a transaction. And relationships lead to loyalty. That distinction really matters. Always remember this: *Give, give, and give and you won't need to ask ever.*

Brand Literature offers businesses many benefits.

It helps to 1) Preserve institutional memory 2) Welcome new employees 3) Strengthen internal pride 4) Build public trust 5) Offer journalists rich material 6) Create a deeper emotional connection with people 7) Attract venture funds and capital hard to come by through pitches 8) Become a lasting intellectual asset that continues creating value long after your marketing budget has been spent.

Think of this: You got approximately 1.9 billion book readers around the world. Ads and reels are not the best way to engage with them. Books are. Why else would global brands like Nike, Louis Vuitton, Walmart, Chanel, Disney, Dior, McDonald's, Rolex, Reebok, Starbucks, Ferrari, Gucci, Prada and others still commission books to be written about themselves? Nike has *Shoe Dog*. Disney has *The Ride of a Lifetime*. Starbucks has *Pour Your Heart Into It*. Walmart has

Made in America. McDonald's has *Grinding It Out*. Reebok has *Shoe Maker*. They all still sell well. They convert hearts. Publishers like Simon & Schuster, Penguin Random House, HarperBusiness and Little, Brown continue publishing founder narratives because they know readers will buy them. *Shoe Dog* was embraced not because readers wanted to learn about Nike's supply chain, but because Phil Knight wrote a compelling human story about building Nike.

But these are still corporate history books. They are not brand literature yet. I'd go an extra mile to create more entertaining literary works.

Why don't you mine real people stories? Why just founders' stories? Why not your customers' stories? Why not your workers' stories? I'd also suggest that you get it written now and not after struggling to become an icon in 120 years. You do this now, you get to do bigger things ahead. Because you'll have converted a big tribe to your side already with a juicy book.

Unlike campaigns, literature does not expire with the quarter. It remains. A beautifully written short or long book can live simultaneously on Google Books, Apple Books, Kindle, company websites, and in waiting rooms, boardrooms, employee induction programmes, HR programmes, PR initiatives, gifting seasons, university syllabuses, and public libraries. It can travel the world as a free copy over WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, X, TikTok, Snapchat and more. It becomes part of a brand's permanent cultural footprint rather than another forgotten campaign. It also becomes a social buzz.

Please remember that Brand Literature is not here to replace advertising, but to support it by deepening the meaning of a brand, one unforgettable story at a time. History suggests that organisations are rarely remembered because they advertised the loudest. They are remembered because they stood for something recognisably human.

Why Us?

Why us? I come from the world of screenwriting in Malayalam cinema, widely regarded as India's most respected film industry for one simple reason: impactful storytelling. Before that, I worked in journalism—national and international—beginning as a cub reporter and later occupying the editor's chair. Before that, I had been a copywriter in small local agencies, learning how words influence attention and behaviour. I have authored three books, plus, ghostwritten six books for entrepreneurs, some of them published by Penguin Random House, Harper Collins, and Rupa Publications.

These disciplines, practised over more than twenty-five years, have taught me one enduring fact: Good writing grips people—regardless of their age or the age they live in. Technologies change. Platforms change. Human nature does not. We remain irresistibly drawn to stories that move us, surprise us and reveal something new.

In 2014, one of India's finest luxury heritage hospitality groups, CGH Earth, commissioned me to write *The Book of People*—a literary portrait of the humans behind their brand—workers, managers, chefs, masseuse, boatmen, beach guards. Published by DC Books, it is still selling on Amazon today. That's the power of 'brand literature'.

Your business is directly or indirectly causing many, many amazing human events, day after day. But are you aware that you are losing all those stories of your brand's daily impact when left untold? Most leaderships never discover them. Few still preserve them—the receptionist whose warmth becomes a guest's lasting memory or the founder's uncertainty before the first breakthrough or the factory worker whose discipline shapes a corporate reputation without ever appearing in an annual report.

This is not a marketing trick. This is genuine literature waiting to be written that millions of people in the world would love to read. So

stop worrying about winning attention. Tell stories of profound human emotion, and you win far more than just attention—you win their hearts.

Now you know why a real story of a flight attendant holding a nervous passenger's hand well-told will bring more repeat bookings to that airline company than a million-dollar campaign.

Are you willing to serve the world good stories or not?
Your answer changes your future.

Joshua Newton

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1.

Brand Fiction.

First, we pick the most impactful real life incidents around your brand. Then we anonymise details and reconstruct the scenes for maximum reading pleasure. The result reads like fiction, yet stays faithful to the inspiring event. Here's an example based on a real incident at Club Mahindra's Madikeri resort.

A close-up, slightly low-angle shot of a small, handmade teddy bear made from blue denim fabric. The bear is sitting and leaning against a rough, light-colored stone or concrete wall. It has a single visible yellow button eye, a small dark blue stitched eye, and a worn, frayed nose. Its limbs are also frayed and show the inner padding. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights on the bear's fabric and the wall.

BRAND FICTION

The Bear.

BASED ON REAL EVENTS FROM CLUB MAHINDRA

JOSH NEWTON

BRAND FICTION

The Bear



The family had been gone three hours when the old black rotary telephone began to ring.

Giri was changing the ribbon on the dot-matrix printer behind the reception desk. He wiped his hands on a cleaning rag, lifted the receiver and held it against his ear and his shoulder. Club Mahindra Madikeri, he said. Front desk.

The man's voice came from somewhere down the mountain road, faint and breaking up between the hills. He sounded like a father who had run out of answers. Giri, we left the bear there man, the caller said. The blue one with a missing ear. My daughter won't stop crying. We're near Hunsur now. We can't turn back.

Sir, let me check with housekeeping, Giri said. Hold on, please. He laid the receiver down on the polished wood counter. Outside, the winter mist drifted down through the trees carrying the smell of wet bark and woodsmoke. It was three in the afternoon and it already looked like dusk.

Giri walked down the covered stone corridor to the laundry. Sarita was lifting sheets out of a large industrial dryer. The room was full of hot lint and clean steam.

Room 214, Giri said. The family that checked out after breakfast. They leave anything?

Sarita didn't stop folding the sheets. She used her chin to point toward a wooden shelf near the door. The bear was sitting between two plastic jugs of bleach. It looked like an old denim shirt left in the sun too long. It had a yellow button for an eye tied on with black thread. Found it under the bed, Sarita said.

Giri picked up the tiny bear. It was light in his hands and smelled of milk powder and biscuits. The stuffing was lumpy inside the cloth and its nose had gone flat. He took the teddy back to the front desk. The line was still open, the receiver buzzing softly against the blotter.

We have it, Giri said into the mouthpiece.

He heard a sigh and a little laugh. Can you please courier it to our Bangalore address? I'll pay the charges. Just... put it in a box. She won't eat her supper without it.

Don't worry sir. I'll take care of it, said Giri.

He hung up the phone and looked at the bear. The bear looked back at him with its one button eye. The printer ribbon now lay unspooled on the desk like a dead snake. He had three hours left of his shift, and the resort was in its afternoon lull. Guests were either out in the hills or dozing through the soft afternoon. Giri reached into the drawer and took out his old silver Nikon with scratches all over.

He looked at the bear again.

Come on, he said.

Giri took it to the swimming pool where the water lay still, reflecting the trees upside down. He made the bear sit on the edge of a canvas lounge chair and tilted its head back as if it was watching the sky. Giri got down on one knee. The wet concrete dampened his trousers as he took the picture. *One.*

In the main kitchen, the pastry chef, Kamath, a small man, was rolling out dough for the evening tarts. The room was warm and smelled of vanilla.

Put this on the board, Giri said, holding out the bear.

Kamath looked at the bear, then at Giri. He didn't say anything. He was fifty years old and cared only about the heat of his ovens. He took a small paper hat like they gave to the children and set it between the bear's ears. He also put a flour-dusted wooden spoon under its stubby arm. Giri leaned back against the stainless steel table and took the shot. The flash made Kamath blink. *Two.*

By five o'clock the mist went away and a soft drizzle began. Giri carried the bear down to the front gate. Thimmaiah, the old watchman, was standing under the tin roof holding his long bamboo stick. His moustache held thick tobacco smell. Giri tied a paper tag around the bear's neck that said *Trainee* and set it on top of the logbook.

Don't let him slip, Giri said.

Thimmaiah spat out into the wet bushes and looked at the camera. Then he raised his heavy hand to his forehead and gave a stiff military salute. Giri clicked the shutter again. *Three.*

That night when the front desk went dark and the night auditor had taken over, Giri sat in the back office with a small glue stick and a sheet of white art paper. He had the photo prints from the little shop in town. One by one, he pasted them on the sheet. Under the picture at the pool he wrote in his neatest script: *Finally learned to swim. Water is cold.* Under the kitchen picture: *Chef Kamath says I am no help at all.* Under the gate picture: *On night patrol with guard Thimmaiah. After nine, no monkeys.* There were a few more.

Giri folded the paper into a small book and wrote on the cover: *Teddy's Vacation at Club Mahindra, Madikeri.* He found a cardboard box in the storeroom and wrapped the bear in two layers of brown butcher paper and laid the little book on top of it and taped the box

shut. He wrote the Bangalore address on the box and stood there looking at it under the fluorescent light. The rain was falling hard on the tin roof of the laundry yard and it did not sound like it was going to stop.

Three days later, on a Tuesday afternoon, the box arrived in Bangalore. The father cut the brown tape with a kitchen knife. The girl could hardly stand still, watching. When the paper parted, she reached in and pulled the bear out by its one good ear, burying her face in its biscuit-scented chest.

Then she saw the booklet at the bottom of the box and forgot the bear was even lost. She sat on the floor with it, turning each page slowly and telling the story to the bear in a quiet voice as if she were telling it what had happened.

Her parents sat and leaned forward to see their teddy's adventures: the paper chef's hat, the pool, the night patrol at the gate. Suddenly, they began to feel that the bear had actually wanted this solo trip all along. And it seemed that the bear had a secret life they would never fully know. The girl's eyes grew wide at that thought and she liked the teddy more for it and held it a little tighter.

A week later, a copy of the letter the father wrote found its way to the corporate office in Mumbai, where it was pinned to a noticeboard. The regional manager sat back in his padded leather chair, his spectacles resting on the bridge of his nose as he scanned the glowing lines from the father. He first laughed and then took his pen, circled Giri's name on the dispatch sheet, and reached for the phone to dial Madikeri.



2.

Brand Essay.

We look at your product with a fresh pair of eyes and write engaging nonfiction about its place in the world. It explains, entertains, and enlightens. We craft the prose so enjoyable that audiences would want to spend their coffee break reading it.

Here's a brand essay on Cadbury Milk Chocolate.



BRAND ESSAYS

The chocolate that knows your name.

WHY CADBURY GETS AWAY WITH EVERYTHING

JOSH NEWTON

BRAND ESSAY

The Chocolate That Knows Your Name



He sat on the front porch where the afternoon sun came down lightly. He always sat in his cane chair polished by forty years of use, watching the road shimmer in the heat. A decade ago, the doctors had come for his whiskey. Then they took away his salt, his fried pork chops, and finally, his sugar. They left him with nothing but a cane, a rocking chair, and a blood monitor that judged his actions every morning. He would sit on that porch in the evenings with his hands placed on his knees that looked like worn leather. He had earned every crease in them.

The boy came by most evenings on a bicycle that rattled before it appeared. He never stayed long. He would sit on the step below the

old man's chair, then look around and slowly reach into his shirt pocket and slip something into the old man's weathered palm. One square of Cadbury Dairy Milk. Broken off a bar, the edges already softened in the heat, smudged by his thumbprint. Neither the boy nor the old man spoke a word on such solemn occasions.

The old man closed his fist around it, and waited till the boy's bicycle disappeared beyond the bend before opening it again. A tiny square of mercy. He would then lay it on his tongue and close his eyes, allowing it to melt slow, carrying milk and cocoa, bringing up memories long gone like his wife's laugh from another kitchen, his daughter's crayons rolling under their dining table, and their dog walks in the misty mornings—his happy past before life began taking all that away from him. Those images would make him stop rocking his chair. The doctors were wrong, the old man would realise as the milky sweetness began thinning in his mouth: *You can't survive on just good behaviour. Sometimes, a man needs a little mercy. At least a square of it. Or maybe two or three more.*

2

One Bite For a Bruised World

Life is mostly hard. Especially when one begins to wonder where and how the decades went. It is a long string of flat tires on dusty roads or emails from banks that arrive exactly when the account is empty, and grief that settles in the chest like wet sand. We go through our days pretending we are strong enough to carry it all, walking around with our shoulders squared against the wind, but the absolute truth is, everybody is tired. There's a strangely beautiful book I read every day, *A Course in Miracles*. It says: "The world is very tired." No wonder, everybody needs a place to hide, even if it only lasts a minute or two.

This piece of chocolate will not pay the rent. It will not cure the sickness, and it certainly will not bring back the dead or turn a bad

man into a good one. It is just sugar, milk, and the sweat of a cocoa bean, folded up in a simple piece of coloured foil. But when you let it melt on your tongue, slow and thick, it acts as a sudden mercy we deserve. For a moment or two, the harshness of the world is muted, replaced by a rich companionship. An economical reminder, melting right there in the warmth of your mouth, that this bruised and battered world still has just enough goodness left in it to make it through until morning.

3

A Quaker's Dream and a Purple Wrapper

The first chocolates I ever knew did not come from Switzerland. They came from stories. Glossy magazines in our neighbourhood barber shop showed children in thick white coats eating rich brown chocolates beneath snow-covered mountains. Of course, we had our *barfi* (barf actually means 'snow') and *parippu* payasam. But there were other kinds of names we did not understand. Those that floated on glossy pages: Toblerone. Lindt. Strange and wonderful names that sounded like distant planets. To me, once, names like that belonged to faraway dads returning with scented suitcases. We were on a different planet altogether.

But one day, our good news arrived.
Inside a purple wrapper.

History often remembers kings and generals. I am of the staunch opinion that it ought to remember confectioners and writers instead. Aren't we great people too? Long before I became a writer, long before Cadbury chocolate reached our neighbourhood stores in Kochi, a young Quaker named John Cadbury unlocked the door of a modest grocery shop on Bull Street in Birmingham.

Back then, England was wearing soot like a second skin. Chimneys coughed black coal smoke into the sky and the streets

smelled of stale ale and horse dung. Iron rang against iron. Carts rolled over wet cobblestones before even the sun rose. Men hurried to factories. Women rushed with baskets through the market. Hard labour had a way of stealing all the softness from people's hands and hearts. So they drank a lot of gin and rum to feel lighter.

As a young apprentice to a tea dealer in Leeds in 1818, John had learned the mechanics of importing and selling exotic dry goods. One blessed day, his father, Richard Tapper Cadbury spoke to John about this thing called cocoa, the dried and fully fermented seed of *Theobroma cacao*, the cacao tree native to the Amazon rainforest and first domesticated at least 5,300 years ago. Richard was a successful cloth merchant in Birmingham and a prominent Quaker. Cocoa beans were then a relatively misunderstood and underutilised commodity. And John began to feel that this dry seed was whispering some hushed secrets in his mind. Though cocoa was a drink with a history no one knew what else to do with it.

So, in the spring of 1824, John Cadbury opened a small grocery shop at 93 Bull Street, Birmingham. Everything in John's town seemed to move towards speed. His shop did not. Behind its windows were tea from distant hills, coffee from warmer countries, and spices folded into paper packets. There was nothing in this little shop to suggest a possible empire in the making. Isn't that how life works? We don't get to see what's to come. Every day, John saw only some old shelves and wooden drawers holding fragrant coffee and a bell that announced each customer. And John, he was a happy man.

The Quakers viewed alcohol as the root cause of poverty, violence, and societal decay. John recognised that cocoa—when boiled with water or milk—could be marketed as a nutritious alternative to alcohol. In the beginning, this was all manual labour. He prepared the drinking chocolate himself using a traditional mortar and pestle to grind the tough cocoa beans. Listen hard enough and you'll hear below the clatter of factories, the scrape of a wooden spoon through a

bowl of cocoa and the hopeful sigh of a young man who believed that something gentle could earn its place in a hard world.

John was not dreaming of building an empire. He was dreaming of purity, of something wholesome a poor man could afford instead of the fermented drink. While others sold generic cocoa, John held it close to his heart like a craft. By 1831, he bought a four-story warehouse in Birmingham and became a commercial manufacturer of cocoa drink. In a few years, Cadbury was offering 16 varieties of drinking chocolate and 11 different cocoa powders, effectively turning a standard commodity into a highly customised, premium product.

But John's was an unhappy ending. His second wife Candia's death devastated him. The man who sweetened many lives fell into bitter depression. The business took a plunge, bleeding money. The visionary retired and later passed away in 1889, when he was 87.

4

A Borrowed Name and an Enriching Ad

John's sons Richard and George took over this failing shop in 1861 and by 1899 they had multiplied the factory to more than three times its original size. They raised a village called Bournville. There, the Cadbury family built homes, gardens, schools and playing fields for workers and families. As Quakers, they knew that commerce without conscience was no victory. I like to imagine lanes of happy brick houses to where Cadbury's workers returned each evening, carrying the smell of cocoa in their clothes, their children and wives waiting at the doors, their happy supper boiling on the stove.

Later came George Cadbury Jr., who wanted to make milk chocolate richer than anything then available. After years of experimenting, in 1905, he and his team worked out a method to press more milk into a chocolate bar than any manufacturer had

managed before. They didn't have a name for this. One day, a customer's daughter casually asked for their 'dairy milk chocolate'. Someone reported the name back to the managers. And it was named so.

There is a picture that used to run on every wrapper: two glasses tipping milk into a bar of chocolate. It was more than an advertisement back then. It was, near as I can tell, a builder of hopes in humans. The formula relied on whole milk worked into the cocoa in a ratio that gave it a smooth, mellow character, and that image of milk pouring in became one of the most enduring pictures in the history of selling anything. What it sold, though, was not really chocolate. It sold the idea of "having enough". That's what it sold. Not just a sip. Not just a little. A glass and a half of milk—for a working man's family, at a time when milk itself was not something every family could count on.

In a few years, Cadbury Dairy Milk became Britain's favourite chocolate.

5

The Girl in the Blue Dress

Cadbury reached India in 1948.

Years later, it took a television ad for the Dairy Milk chocolate to find its way into the Indian heart. They called it *Asli Swad Zindagi Ka*—the real taste of life. A girl in a soft floral dress sat in the breathless stands, chewing on a square of thick milk chocolate. Her eyes were locked on a sun-baked cricket pitch. Then came the heavy crack of willow wood. The ball went soaring for a winning six, and she simply forgot herself. Slipping past a stern-faced guard, she ran out onto the open grass and broke into a wild, joyous dance. The 30-second ad was revolutionary for Cadbury in India. Back then chocolate was marketed exclusively to children. That dancing girl shattered the

unwritten law. She gave every tired, sober adult the absolute right to tear open a purple wrapper, shed the heavy burden of being grown, and taste the sudden, unapologetic joy of being alive. Back in those times in India, it was no small thing to be given permission to run, to dance, to be joyful.

I think Cadbury did not simply make chocolate. It waited patiently for the world to discover that sweetness could be for everyone and for any day, and not reserved for Christmas tins or for the rich man's table. As the years passed, sons joined fathers, factories rose from fields, and the little shop grew into something almost impossible to imagine. Yet somewhere inside all that machinery remained the same simple ambition: to offer ordinary people a small kindness they could afford.

Generations have unfolded since then. Wars came. Sugar was rationed. Ships crossed oceans carrying cocoa beans from lands far warmer than England's grey mornings. Advanced machines came, company grew bigger, ownership changed hands, and the little grocery became a name recognised almost everywhere the sun rises.

Yet if you ask someone about Cadbury and they are unlikely to speak first of business strategy or quarterly earnings. They'll tell you about a purple wrapper folded into a schoolbag, a square of Dairy Milk broken in half for a younger sister, a father's pocket warmed by the chocolate he promised not to forget. Even the colour purple began to mean that somebody loved you enough to spend more than they should.

Perhaps that is the truest history any company can hope for. Not the dates engraved in annual reports, but the quiet moments it helped create. The purple wrapper, was a promise and the thick slab inside, a revelation. It melted slow, heavy, and sweet, coating every human heart like a blessing.

6

The Long Walk Home

On the rare occasions Dairy Milk arrived in our house, the chocolate was never eaten immediately. It would be placed in a plastic box in the kitchen while the three of us—my dad, my mom, and I—admired it, almost the way you look at a new radio. Then came the ceremony of dividing it into equal squares. No arguments. No grabbing. You learnt patience before sweetness. I can still hear the crack of those neat little squares breaking apart. It sounded like permission to be joyful.

There's a visual I never forget: In my dad's hands, the foil comes off like a small miracle, and the chocolate beneath is revealed. He breaks a square like Jesus breaks dry bread and it snaps clean, a sound like a wish being granted, and extends to my mom and then another one comes for me. And in my hands the scent hits me: not just chocolate, but a memory of every good thing you ever hid in your pocket, with a fragrance of warm milk and sugared earth that immediately helps me pretend that I'm a rich daddy's boy.

It melts the way good things should, slow and deliberate, leaving your fingers tacky and your heart a little lighter. The milky, but brown, chocolate melted with a velvety richness that coated the tongue and made the noisy world outside hush for a spell. As my tongue turned around its creamy cocoa layers, a slow chocolatey sense of goodness grew in my mouth, making time stay still for a moment.

7

The Chocolate That Remembers You

I have eaten this chocolate on terraces hidden from others and under our kitchen table when mummy took her afternoon nap, and once, shameful as it was, after the guilt of a cigarette smoke in a bush

with my schoolmates. Some folks want their chocolate dark and bitter. But give me just the sweet one, for doesn't it always taste like being looked after?

They say it is just milk and sugar and cocoa. They are wrong. It is a man's quiet love, wrapped in purple. I also remember the first time I held a bar of it, the foil whispering secrets as I peeled it back. This was the chocolate you saved your pennies for, not to gulp down, but to make it last. That chocolate carried the weight of a hundred small kindnesses, a gentle richness that seemed to say everything would be alright. Even now, its taste is a return ticket, a direct line to a time when joy was a simple, foil-wrapped thing, and the world could be softened, one deliberate square at a time.

This chocolate remembers seasons. It remembers hands. It remembers who sat beside you wanting to be yours. It remembers who gave you that kiss you don't want to forget.

8

What We Really Bought

As Indians, we always had magnificent sweets of our own. Mysore *Pak*. Laddus warm with ghee. Milk *peda* pressed by hand. Payasam stirred slowly until the spoon could almost stand upright. Nobody needed imported pleasures to teach us sweetness. Yet there was something curious about that purple wrapper. It gently entered birthdays, long train journeys, awkward apologies between siblings, report cards hidden inside school bags, first salaries, wedding gifts, hospital visits, reconciliations after foolish quarrels. It quietly found its place without asking anybody to surrender their love for payasam or *peda*. As if there was room in every family for one more sweet memory.

Cadbury Dairy Milk is democratic. It is not reserved for the elite. It is not locked away in glass cases. It is sold in corner shops, in

railway stations, in dusty kiosks by the roadside. It is eaten by children in schoolyards, by lovers on park benches, by workers on their lunch breaks. There is something profoundly human in that. A sweetness shared across class and caste, across city and village. A sweetness that does not discriminate.

Even now, when I unwrap a bar of Dairy Milk, I eat it slow. I let the chocolate melt heavy on my tongue, let it coat my mouth, let it remind me of who I was and where I come from. And I save the last square for a little later, always, as if it were a ritual. Because Cadbury Dairy Milk is more than chocolate. It is a storehouse of memories. It is a longing answered. It is the taste of childhood, of festivals, of love offered in small, square pieces. And in that last square, I find not just sweetness, but pure grace to go ahead to keep going.



3.

BRAND PORTRAIT.

We walk alongside the fascinating people behind your brand, quietly recording their routines and conversations. Then, we craft rich, vivid character profiles that read like your favourite magazine features. We write real lives in a way that audiences are instantly drawn in, eager to know the person and the brand he or she represents. Here's a sample brand portrait of eco-conscious luxury resort, Spice Village (CGH Earth Group) told through the life of Ravuthar, a thatcher of grass huts, a freelancer at the property.

BRAND PORTRAIT

The thatcher of fables.

SPICE VILLAGE SEEN THROUGH A GRASS CUTTER'S LIFE

JOSH NEWTON

BRAND PORTRAIT

The Thatcher of Fables



On a rain-wet bitumen road under white fleecy clouds, through the mist, I reached the hills where the Empire had once nested—Empire in the form of a few white families that lived and lorded over the lands of the brown natives.

I did not go there tempted by the hills or the Empire's leftovers. My journey was to meet a native who had remained through these seven decades at the foothills. He had continued to charm the journeymen with an ancient architectural practice: thatching huts with wild grass.

To me, he was the remnant of a hospitable past, a curator of the native tradition that welcomed those from other lands. I had

imagined a stern, large man, a man of the hills. Instead, I saw a puny man named Ravuthar. In him, I met a man of fables, a true-blue hero of *The Book of Job*. He looked very much like Osama bin Laden—smaller and a little darker, perhaps, but striking in his resemblance, the beard and all. He told me that he was once invited by a television crew to play the role. Ravuthar feared that would embarrass his sons and declined. He lived by the rustic hills and dense jungles of teak and coffee and beasts of various kinds in a place called Lotus Pond. A few families lived there in a tiny, crowded colony by the woods; families that lived off the forest, off its waste wood, timber, grazing grounds, and dry grass.

They called him attha, or the elder. This frail man had something immovable in him, something rocky. However much he laughed along with a joke or nodded or hopped off like a bird upon any invite to work, however tiny and malleable the man appeared, the deep metal in him took no battering. His faith in Allah was final, and he smiled away your scepticism with his simple tales. His insistence on karma and its fair practices was indisputable owing to its fairness. His embrace of a monastic hardship was beyond reproach given his humility. With mere grass, Ravuthar raised impenetrable roofs for Spice Village, a charming resort in Thekkady, Kerala, located next to the Periyar Tiger Reserve.

A unique man for a unique idea

To understand the quiet soul of Spice Village, you must first look up. While the nearby townships of Kumily and Thekkady have increasingly surrendered to the march of mortar and concrete, this patch of the Western Ghats holds fiercely to the old ways. The roofs here are not poured, shingled, or shipped in on roaring lorries. They are grown wild in the dry scrub, harvested by hand, and woven together by this frail, immovable man named Ravuthar.

He does not smoke, he does not drink, and he does not partake in gossip. He is a man built of simple maths and staggering faith, armed only with a half-moon sickle re-handled with the pale horn of a buffalo. For over fifty years, until his bones told him to stop at the age of sixty-seven, Ravuthar walked ten to fifteen miles barefoot into the deep, rumbling jungles of Thekkady to reap *pothappullu*, the towering elephant grass.

I wondered first about the creators, the ones who thought to employ Ravuthar—CGH Earth, an eco-conscious hospitality group known for its utter commitment to sustainable practices. When they wanted this property to feature tribal-style, elephant-grass thatched cottages set within a spice garden, they called Ravuthar for the grass work. A unique man for a unique idea.

There is a profound, unhurried genius to the architecture here. We were sitting in Spice Village's rustic bar—Ravuthar was a staunch believer in the rules of Islam and wouldn't touch anything sold there—and I said there were a few holes in the bar cottage's roof. Ravuthar took me around and showed the holes in my perception. We stood by the wooden bar counter of the resort and stretched our necks to look at the tiny pores once again. We saw a few blue dots of sky through the dry grass roof. I felt vindicated. He would not budge. He patiently explained that beneath those visible pores lay multiple, unseen layers of grass. Light might slip through the angles, but not a single drop of rain ever would. He could add another layer to block the specks of sky, he noted, but "why overdo things?". He laughed, allowing the guest to laugh at himself.

That laugh is the brand signature of Spice Village.

It does not overdo. It provides exactly what is needed, with perfect and simple dignity. The mechanics of the cottages are a masterclass in indigenous tribal wisdom. The roofs sit about a foot thick, built upon sturdy planks of vertically cut nutmeg trunks and sliced areca palm.

Layer upon layer of dried grass is laid down, insulating the rooms so perfectly that they maintain a moderate, breathing temperature against both the heat and the damp chill of the hills. Inside, guests find themselves sleeping off "as if lulled". The lower layers of this mesh remain intact for five to six years, utterly ignored by termites, though they occasionally play host to a family of nesting squirrels.

Wandering along the stone-paved paths, you realise the structures are wearing the very earth they stand upon. The cottages are modelled after the dwellings of the indigenous Mannan tribe. Their roofs, woven meticulously from dry elephant grass, breathe with the changing temperatures. There is no gleaming concrete or glass to separate you from the wild. Instead, there is the texture of thatch, the rustle of the Malabar giant squirrel in the canopy above, and a profound sense that the walls are quietly listening to the forest.

Thus you feel the essence of Spice Village: it is not a manicured, hermetically sealed illusion of nature. It is a place literally born of the thicket. *Pothappullu* is the longest grass found in the jungle, and with enough silica deposited in its epidermal layers, it thrives in dry scrub jungles, demanding fair, open light. Under a canopy, in the wet, or in evergreen jungles, it simply dies. On flat surfaces, it grows up to ten feet, though six feet is the tallest Ravuthar usually harvests.

Grafting the legacy of the rustic wisdom

He knows this grass intimately. Once, possessed by the pure curiosity of a child, he plucked the thinnest, greenest baby-shoot and chewed it. A smooth wash of sweet juice spread across his tongue, and he finally understood why the wild elephants and bears devoured the fields so eagerly. It made him happy. It is this very grass, seasoned by the tropical sun until it turns a pale, dry gold, that ultimately shelters the travellers.

Ravuthar just needed a few bundles of grass and that tropical sun to make his living. As simple as his prayer, as sonorous as his laughter, as glassy as his eyes, as nimble as his moves, as methodical as his hand skills, Ravuthar grafted a legacy of the old, of the jungle, of the tribal wisdom, holding forth an ancient art to make it a part of the modern traveller's experience at Spice Village.

To stay beneath one of these roofs is to be sheltered by a man's life work. Ravuthar's own life was a masterclass in Franciscan penury. He raised his family in a two-room house named Sulaiha Manzil, where the chimney did not let out the smoke and his wife, Sulaiha, sometimes boiled jackfruit without salt for their lunch and supper. In the jungle, he survived by eating leftover gruel—the rancid rice juice tasting like honey after a day of backbreaking labour—or drinking from puddles of rainwater collected in the muddy footprints of elephants.

Once, walking blindly with a heavy bundle of grass hanging over his face, he literally bumped into a wild tusker. The great beast simply stood still. Ravuthar dropped his load and ran, surviving because, as he firmly believes, he always prayed for safe passage and made a point to never swear at the animals. "In the jungle, beasts had a different way of understanding," he noted, recalling how that very same elephant killed another grass-cutter the next day—a man who had once cursed at it.

This is what you are buying into when you cross the threshold of Spice Village. You are not purchasing mere facilities or a backdrop for a photograph. You are slipping into a thousand fables. You are resting beneath the harvest of a man who would pause in the wilderness to cleanse himself in a forest stream and pray five times a day.

Spice Village is a monument to that exact shade of humility. It is a refuge of gruel and gratitude, woven tight enough to keep the storms out, but just porous enough to let the light in. On the hill, after many

years of toil good enough to make anyone kneel and weep, Ravuthar chose to pray in silence. Later, I asked him what he thanked his God for. His answer choked me. Under a solemn green-brown sapodilla tree, the frail old man had knelt simply to thank his God—for blessing this earth with grass, and for giving him a share of it.



You may book a traditional thatched cottage with a roof hand-thatched by Ravuthar himself, at Spice Village by visiting their website: <https://www.cghearth.com/spice-village>

Thank You



Hope you enjoyed this compilation and the manifesto. If you have a project or an idea in mind that you would like to discuss, please feel free to email me at josh@earthopia.co or ping me on +91 98955 20955. If you wish to learn more, visit our website at Earthopia.co

I wish you and your brand the very best ahead.

Joshua Newton



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