

TIGER BELAL

RUMMAN R KALAM

Harun walked into the office space while pulling up his trousers above his hips even though he had a belt. Yawning, he opened the door and looked at the man sitting behind the small wooden desk. The room was sparsely decorated with just a frame above the desk, a filing cabinet and two wooden chairs.

"Hello, I'm Harun. Mr. Tiger Belal?" asked Harun.

"Yes, please have a seat," said Tiger Belal, pronouncing it as "sit."

"I've come here to verify your personal information. You drew a separate box here and checked 'Tiger' in the gender details. Why?" inquired Harun.

"It's because I am a tiger," said Tiger Belal with one eyebrow raised.

"No, you're not." came the reply.

The two men stared at each other for full 10 seconds.

Tiger Belal scratched his cheek and continued to stare.

"Tiger isn't a gender, Mr. Belal. We can't have that at this stage of the selection process," said a

deadpan Harun.

"But I am a tiger," came the reply.

The two men stared at each other for full 7

seconds before Tiger Belal slid open a drawer.

"That does not make you a tiger, Mr. Belal. You need to stop this."

The two stared at each other for full 5 seconds until Belal took off his plastic tiger mask.

"But I am a tiger," he said.

Belal let go of his mask and let it slide down onto the floor.

He stared into Harun's eyes, leaned over and held Harun's face in his hands. The two of them were 8 inches apart from each other.

"This is inappropriate," said Harun slowly.

The two stared at each other for full 3 seconds.

"But I am a tiger," Belal said.

The two stared at each other for a full second.

"Yes, you are, my big boy," said

Harun.

Tiger Belal smiled.

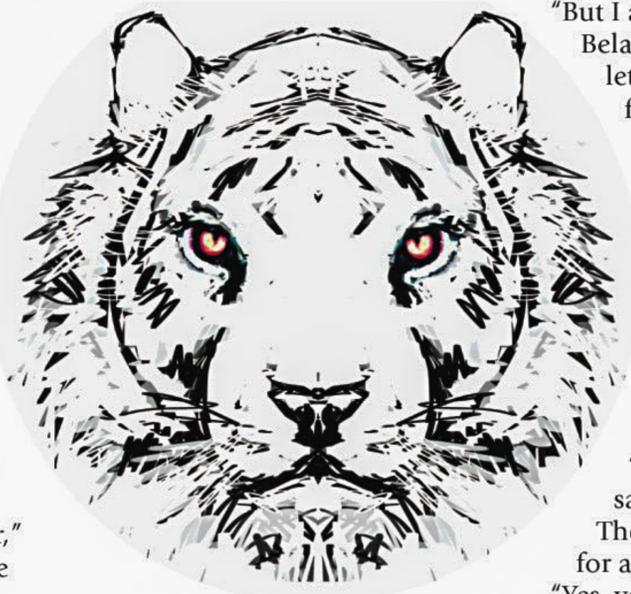


ILLUSTRATION:
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Rumman R Kalam is a Sub-editor at SHOUT and when he's off-duty, he likes to be a goat with opposable thumbs at Rantages. You can send him hate mail to: tehgoatlord@rantages.com



From Hlww to Happyness

MASHIAT LAMISA

I still remember our first conversation;
 "Hlwwww, cub balo lagse tomaka," you said.
 "Heyloww, tnx!" I replied, turning completely red.
 Your name was LoNeLy BoY,
 And I was AngEl ToY,
 And from the first day,
 I knew we were made to be each other's joy.
 "Kamon aso bbygurl?" you knocked me on day two.
 You suggested I listen to some Momtaj,
 You were too good to be true.
 You told me you were 16 – just two years older to me,
 And I started picturing how big our wedding will be –
 There will be balloons and photographs,
 And people and kachchi,
 And I will be done with my exams – the one they call SSC.
 We spent days and nights talking on phone,
 "HE iz ma LyF," I told everyone.
 Likes came in on our posts like crazy,
 "Congr8s vya," they said,
 "LUV Ma Pwincess," you replied.
 Everything was going well but then we had a fight;
 I told you to change your name to AngEl BoY
 And you wanted my name to be LoNeLy ToY
 I couldn't see anymore the future of us,
 Listened all day to Momtaj's Local Bus.
 You raised your fists and I jumped off a bed,
 "I m miss bby sm rn irl," you wrote;
 I can't even tell you how many tears I shed.
 7 days passed and you knocked me,
 "AngEl BoY" – you had changed your name finally.
 I was happy, so were you, we video chatted too,
 "Marriage shall happen," I declared,
 "Ya lol," when you said, I knew happiness was true.

