Twitter Thread by Ramki



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My father likes to brag. Specially about his athletic abilities. Truth is, he does manage to catch the toast before it falls to the floor. At half his age, I can't do that. "Keeper's reflexes", he says. The rest of us exchange 'there he goes again' glances. Mom just smiles. +

We've heard his 'I could have played for India' story a few times. About how one dropped catch in a crucial match cost him his India berth. How he quit the game after that. And became an actuary. Instead of people studying his stats, he studied theirs. +

It's true that his keeper-reflexes have saved many a pickle jar, egg, and tea cup. He has thumbed his nose at gravity so often. we jokingly call him Rakesh Sharma. He'd have preferred Kiri or Rod or Alan. +

Here's his story. Years ago, his team was one wicket away from victory. The opponents two runs away. The pitch was crumbling. Dogra bowled a beaut. The ball pitched and reared up. It took the bat's shoulder and sailed towards him. That was the India cap flying into his hands. +

Tragically, along with the ball, a clod from the disintegrating pitch flew up too. Dad's eyes stayed on the clod. While the ball mockingly wafted by him. And rolled over the rope. It was a catch Kachra could have taken. +

He hung up his gloves. Literally. They are on his wall in his office cabin. Inviting suckers to walk into a retelling of his story. They all fall for it. And he tells the story with a lot, lot more detail than I just did. +

Last night he saved a flower vase that didn't need saving. It was made of metal. Mom was arranging flowers. And she toppled the vase. An involuntary 'oops' escaped her. Dad dived heroically from the sofa. +

The vase had sharp edges. There was more blood than the injury deserved. Panicky voices were raised. Siblings hithered and thithered in Brownian fashion. Minor mayhem ensued. Some gauze, cotton, and dettol later, quiet returned. +

That's when I said, 'Baba, enough is enough. You don't have to save all falling objects. Keeper's reflexes and all is okay. The chief selector is not looking at you any longer. You are not in your 20s now... Ma, why do you encourage this hero-giri?' +

Dad tried to protest. He dismissed his injury as something that would need four, max five overs away from the field. I wasn't going to argue with a crazy man who was at the intersection of his skill sets. Insurance, cricket, and statistics. So I said, 'Ma... please tell him.' +

A resigned expression crossed her face. She looked at Dad, and said with a theatrical sigh, 'I think it's time I told you something your Baba has never let you know. And why I never stopped his 'hero-giri'. She looked just like Nirupa Roy as she went into flashback mode. +

"I was in the labour room with you. It was a very difficult and long childbirth. I was screaming in pain. Finally, you came out. A small, slithery, bloody bundle. As the doctor was handing you over to the nurse... you slipped. And Baba took the best catch of his life."
ANTHE.