



## Seven billion memories

For the first time in our 5,000 years of recorded history, we can tell stories to the world as we see it.

Tell and listen to stories, excel in your storytelling skills, bring on those golden voices of yours and your acquaintances. Justori is for posterity and creativity.



### Journey of JUSTORI

When I was a child, as the clock struck eight I would run to my grandmother for my bedtime story. She would hold her copy of the Mahabharat and tell me the stories, often without turning the pages. I would wonder how that was possible. Now and then I will ask Why and then again Why. Sometimes she would explain. Sometimes she would just say: "listen baby, what happened next". Often during summer holidays two of my uncles visited us in Kolkata. I would wait till the lunch was over and then settle in a quiet, cool room with shutters drawn to listen to their stories. One would take me to the world of Greek mythology and the other told me stories from the Arabian Nights and Persia. No books – all in their own words. Aladin's carpet was at my disposal then to wander the world. As I grew a little older, it was only books that we got as gifts for every occasion and sometimes for no occasion. Besides exploring the ultra-rich Bengali literature, this was the time when I made my journey into the wonderful world of French, Russian (all translated into Bengali) and indeed English/American stories. Our two daughters didn't have the full benefits of residing grandparents or visiting uncles in Mauritius. Still we did our best to tell stories and buy books for our daughters as often as possible. Till almost the end of the last century, it was still pre-digital times and we mercifully almost got away instilling strong reading habits in them.

In the last twenty years, humanity is increasingly turning into flotsam over the tidal waves of instant visual entertainment. The constant feed of breaking news and reality shows, real life like video games and reportage from embedded journalists with night vision goggles in war zones at distant lands glossed up by rioting colours and moving images leave little to imagination. We no longer ask "Why?". There is no longer any thesis or anti-thesis. We are fed into instant synthesis as we move on to gorge down the next feed of visuals. As noted by Isaac Asimov about the US over half a century back, it is sadly becoming true the world over that: ***"the strain of anti-intellectualism has been a constant thread winding its way through our political and cultural life, nurtured by the false notion that democracy means that my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge."***

**Justori** will be a community of individuals across the world to share the common heritage of humanity through stories. Despite the cacophony of languages, the differences in our race, belief, social and economic status, stories by people from lands near and far will make us realize that our joys, sorrows, love, fear, aspirations and apprehensions are just the same. As we will listen to these voices, without our mind being cluttered by canned images that make us believe that we now know it all, we may be liberated to imagine and visualize again inside our own heads. Ourselves we will be then embedded into their circumstances to share their pain and happiness. We need to tell our stories, listen to others' stories and find those common grounds for ourselves. The seeming differences in our values from where we stand today cannot be the reason why we shouldn't look for the bridges those connect us. It may be many miles down the stream but I am just convinced that there are several of such bridges. After all, as Maya Angelou sang – *“We are more alike my friends than we are unlike”*.

Close to a century back, Rabindranath Tagore in his essay on the cult of nations said, *“I do not put my faith in any new institution, but in the individuals all over the world who think clearly, feel nobly, and act rightly, thus becoming the channels of moral truth. Our moral ideals do not work with chisels and hammers. Like trees, they spread their roots in the soil and their branches in the sky, without consulting any architect for their plans”*.

**Justori** aspires to be that rich in nutrient soil where individual trees of humanity can grow to create a harmonious world of coexistence, mutual respect and understanding.

In the meantime, have fun with just stories.



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