

**LAUNCHPAD, by Selva Manikandan Athi Narayanan**

**Summary:** *A married couple, both scientists, present their revolutionary research in the hopes of seeking investors to take it further into commercialisation. They encounter a pair of investors with opposing goals, and one of them lead them to their angel.*

**Characters:**

**DIVYA (f), 30s, scientist**

**SELVA (m), 30s, scientist, married to Divya**

**STEPHEN (m), 40s, a senior investment manager**

**MARTHA (f), 20s, a junior investment manager, Stephen's daughter**

---

**SCENE ONE:** *A stall at a science fair, a presentation in progress. Background sounds of crowd. Many feet on a marble floor.*

**DIVYA:** And thus, ladies and gentlemen, as you can see, our technology has the potential to achieve production of clean fuels at a very minimal cost of implementation. We would like to take it global for the benefit of the planet and the lives on it and we are very confident that the day is just around the corner. Thank you.

*Polite applause. Murmurs from the crowd gathered around the stall.*

**MARTHA:** Wow! This is great.

**STEPHEN:** It might be, yes. Let's have a word with them. Just follow my lead.

*A brief transition as STEPHEN and MARTHA approach DIVYA and SELVA.*

**STEPHEN:** Great job, Divya! And Selva! Dreamday, am I right? Petroleum Industries Conference in Paris. Remember me?

**SELVA:** Stephen Brown. Of course, I remember you! How are you? You represent GBP Ventures, right?

**STEPHEN:** Yeah, that's one of my companies.

**SELVA:** Great to see you here. I must be honest, Mr. Brown. It was your question last year on the impact of our technology on the current market which pushed me into new thinking about it. Divya, Remember the scale-up questions I discussed with you? They were from Stephen.

**DIVYA:** I hope we have addressed that aspect now and that our tech is ready for market.

**STEPHEN:** Well, if what you so eloquently presented is true, it looks like it. Good job, both of you! Science fairs are great places to hunt for the next 'new' in tech, and besides, what is more interesting than fishing for the best bet to put my money on when it is still young *and cheaper!*

**SELVA:** Absolutely Mr. Brown. What do you think? Would you be interested now to engage with us?

**STEPHEN (*sly, testing*):** What do you say Martha?

**MARTHA:** This is a great innovation, dad.

**SELVA (*in an excited tone*):** Ah! Martha. Are you the Martha Brown who just received the young investor award? Great to meet you!

**DIVYA:** Congrats Martha.

***Reduced crowd murmur.***

**MARTHA:** Thank you. What do you think dad? Perhaps CP Corp.?

**SELVA:** That would be great. CP Corp has a huge portfolio of disruptive technologies.

**STEPHEN:** I think it is still gonna be hard to find an investor.

**SELVA:** This technology is very promising, I was hoping most investors would be excited.

**STEPHEN:** You scientists still don't get the full picture. The impact that disruptive technologies like yours could have on traditional businesses may *not* sound 'exciting' to all.

**SELVA:** But Mr. Brown, we are not asking big money to licence this technology. I am happy to share it at a lower cost.

**STEPHEN:** And that, Selva, is even more worrying.

**MARTHA:** I still think CP Corp would be interested/ (don't you think)

**STEPHEN:** I don't think so Martha. However, Selva, I may be able to help you if you would sell this technology wholly to us and let us decide when and how to take it to the public.

**MARTHA:** Dad, we are getting late for the next presentation.

**SELVA (*blurting*):** I shall have to get back to you. Thank you, Stephen, Mr. Brown. Have a nice day, sir.

**STEPHEN:** Good luck.

**STEPHEN** *leaves, but MARTHA hesitates.*

**MARTHA:** It's a great idea you have Dr. & Dr. Dreamday! Please take my card.

**SELVA** (*confused, shaken*): Thank you.

**DIVYA:** Here is our card.

**MARTHA** *catches up to STEPHEN.*

**STEPHEN:** These guys don't have a clue. What a waste of intellectual property to give it away at the price of bread.

**MARTHA:** Yeah, but they seem like a nice couple, dad. Scientists really need a little help from business folks like us.

**STEPHEN:** I saw you exchanged cards. Next time try to be a bit more prudent before showing an interest. Do not get killed trying to help a tiger out of a pit.

**MARTHA:** Well, after all, you aren't going to help Selva come out of the pit, are you?

**STEPHEN:** Absolutely not, darling! Which is why we must visit these tech fairs. As boring as they could get, they sometimes reveal to us the next imminent threat to our interests. Clueless buggers!

**Back at the stall.**

**SELVA:** Oh dear, the days we spent in the lab, the nights, now, we're gonna have to tackle a bunch of naysayers like Stephen to take it further? It's going to be another ride, isn't it?

**DIVYA:** And we shall take the journey together.

**SELVA:** Oh dear, kindness. What would I do without you? Stephen has the power, money, and the network we need. But he is associated with the very industries we challenge. Caring for the environment is the least of his priorities. His heart is like this decorated marble hall. Looks all shiny and beautiful, but it is just a solid stone inside!

**DIVYA:** Perhaps you are right Selva, but did you notice Martha seems so lovely and very friendly.

**SELVA:** Ah! I need to grab a coffee.

**DIVYA:** Great.

**Background sounds of people, coffee machine.**

**SELVA:** Did you get an email from David from Green Ventures?

**DIVYA:** Not yet, but I am sure we may hear back from him. Now! Selva, you could take it easy and forget about the tech for a while. Here. *(giving him his coffee)* Let's enjoy our coffee, shall we?

**SELVA:** Mmm... Coffee! Yes.

...

Nice coffee

...

tastes good

...

smells great

...

but... doesn't stand a chance with the one your mother used to brew!

**DIVYA laughs**

**SELVA (cont'd):** nice colour...

**DIVYA (on a laugh):** Stop!

**SELVA phone beeps. SELVA picks the phone and reads.**

**SELVA:** I have a message from Martha. Looks like she is interested to help us. She is inviting us to a meeting with CP Corp later this week.

**DIVYA:** CP Corp! That's great. But Mr. Brown didn't seem interested earlier...

**SELVA:** Do you think Martha may be going behind his back?

**DIVYA:** I told you she was different.

**SELVA:** I need to start preparing a pitch. We should include our recent results and...

**DIVYA:** Alright. Alright. We have got a lot to do! But everything will be fine, Selva. Shall we focus on our coffee now?

**Both start sipping their coffees.**

**DIVYA:** You still remember the coffee my mum made? It's been years...

**END**