

PADMA BANDOPADHYAY
Episode #10 Transcript
Written by Gabrielle Mirabella
Music by Ernie Bird

GABRIELLE: Before we begin we would like to thank our generous sustaining sponsors! Your donations go directly towards the musical theatre artists you hear on this program. If *you* have an interest in becoming a sustaining member, or donating any amount, head to our website at whatwillshedo.com/donate. Help us bring this show into 2021 by donating today. Thank you!

INTRO MUSIC.

GABRIELLE: Hello! And welcome to this year's final episode of "What will she do next?"

(A "wintery" version of our intro.)

I'm your host Gabrielle Mirabella and together with composer Ernie Bird, (**ERNIE:** Hello!) we've created a podcast that celebrates some of our *favorite* historical women! On today's episode we're reminded that every terrible storm eventually passes. This episode was written & narrated by myself with music & production by Ernie Bird (**ERNIE:** Hello!) Dialect coaching was provided by Vaibu Mohan. Our very special guest star is musician, storyteller, and arts entrepreneur Annette Philip!

ANNETTE: Happy holidays, everyone!

GABRIELLE: And playing today's leading role we have ...

VAIBU: Vaibu Mohan!

GABRIELLE & ERNIE: Enjoy!

GABRIELLE: Are you feeling...stuck? Does the challenge presented before you seem pretty "unsolvable"? Or, perhaps, like many of us right now, you feel confined; with no place to go, no room to grow? Well, don't worry, you're not alone.

Join us, as we investigate seemingly "impossible" situations from the lives of history's most famous women, and ask ourselves...what *will* she do next?

THEME SONG PLAYS:

*"What will she do next?
What will she do next?
Her aim is true but will she see it through?"*

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Oh, what will she do... next?"

GABRIELLE: Today's historical woman: Air Marshal Padma Bandopadhyay: Medical doctor, scientist, the first woman Air Marshal in the Indian Air Force and the first to conduct research at the North Pole.

(Sounds of snow and wind.)

Now, before she gets too "stuck", let's see where she's coming from... Padma Bandopadhyay was born on November 4th, 1944 at Tirupati, in the southern Indian State of Andhra Pradesh. Padma was raised in a loving home, near the temple of Lord Govindaraja, where she and other neighborhood children would snack on "prasadam"; scrumptious food offerings brought to the temple.

(Children giggling)

But, at the age of three years old, Padma's quiet life was greatly altered when her Mother became seriously ill and bedridden. While her Father worked to support the family, young Padma was left to care for the household, learning to make rice, fetch water, and clean. Eventually, Padma's prayers were answered, and her Mother fully recovered from a severe case of tuberculosis.

(YOUNG) PADMA: *(very mature)* I will cook the evening meal, *Amma*, and you will rest.

MOTHER: But, Padma, I am fully healed! The Doctor said so!

(YOUNG) PADMA: Yes, *but...* have you considered a second opinion?

(MOTHER laughs)

MOTHER: Yes, Doctor!

GABRIELLE: These early years of caregiving inspired Padma to become a medical doctor. And, to achieve this, she made a spot for herself at the Armed Forces Medical College in Pune. At the AFMC she not only became a medical doctor, but also a military officer in the Indian Air Force.

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By 1989 Padma Bandopadhyay was now a doctor, an officer, wife, and mother, working hard to achieve her many goals. Despite systemic gender bias, she was quickly rising through the military ranks. Despite a busy schedule, she was caring for two young sons. And, despite living in the warm, tropical climate of Southern India, Padma soon agreed to take on her biggest challenge yet, by becoming the first Indian woman to lead scientific research in the cold, harsh terrain of the North Pole.

(Wind, snow.)

(Scientific ambiance: Computers, beeps, blips.)

The Place: Northern Russia.

The Time: December 24th, 1989.

The Mission: A team of Indian scientists and Russian soldiers has been sent north to study the effects of arctic climates on Indian soldiers.

(Intercom on.)

(Adult PADMA comes on over the intercom)

PADMA: Attention base personnel. This is your Head Medical Officer speaking. I know today's weather was... *rough*. And, it seems, an even greater storm will reach us tomorrow. It also appears that the temperature will dip down to...*(hesitant)* negative forty-five degrees celsius. *(PADMA clears her throat, regaining her composure)* I will see you all in the morning. Thank you and goodnight.

(Intercom off.)

RUSSIAN OFFICER: *Negative forty-five degrees?* I hope the soldiers do not revolt after such news!

PADMA: Is that possible, officer?

RUSSIAN OFFICER: With these grueling conditions, anything is possible... But...Oh well! We will see what tomorrow brings. Goodnight, and *stay warm!*

(Door opens and shuts.)

PADMA: 'Stay warm', he says! *Stay warm?* How is that even possible here??

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PADMA SINGS.

PADMA:

HOW CAN THERE BE WARMTH WITHOUT THE SUN?
HOW LONG CAN I ENDURE THIS?
HOW LONG?

HOW CAN THERE BE SLEEP WITHOUT THE PROMISE OF PEACE?
HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN WAITING?
TOO LONG!

THE SNOW FALLS.
THE WIND BLOWS.
A DARKNESS STARTS TO GROW.

WILL THIS WINTER STORM LAST FOREVER?
HOW LONG UNTIL IT'S OVER?
HOW LONG?

MOTHER: My poor, Padma. How can I help?

(PADMA gasps!)

PADMA: *Amma!* How am I hearing you? You're thousands of miles away!

MOTHER: *Physically*, yes. But, I am always with my daughter.

PADMA: Great! Now, I'm losing my mind.

(MOTHER laughs.)

MOTHER: Oh, Padma! I am not in your *mind!* I'm in your heart!

MOTHER SINGS.

MOTHER:

KICK THE FROST FROM YOUR FEET,
MAKE IT FEEL LIKE YOU'RE DANCING!

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GIVE YOURSELF TO THE WIND,
IT WILL KEEP YOU ADVANCING!

WHEN YOU NEED REST,
GO AND TAKE A BREAK.
YOU MAY BE STRONG,
BUT, I FEEL YOU ACHE.

THE SUN IS DECLINING,
WEATHER CONFINING,
AND HOME IS FAR AWAY.
THE END FEELS DISTANT,
THIS STORM PERSISTENT,
HOW WILL YOU GET THROUGH THIS DAY?

YOU WILL RISE AND SHINE!
RISE AND SHINE!
THERE IS ALWAYS LIGHT IN THE SKY.
YOU CAN SEE IT THERE IF YOU TRY.
RISE AND SHINE!
RISE AND SHINE!

FOLLOW THE LIGHT,
FOLLOW THE GLOW,
YOU'LL MELT AWAY THE ICY SNOW!
RISE AND SHINE TO A BRAND NEW DAY!

PADMA: I can't think of tomorrow when it will be just as bad as today.

MOTHER: (*sarcastically*) My daughter can predict the future now? Lucky me!

PADMA: You know what I mean!

MOTHER: No one knows what tomorrow will bring. So, why not hope for the best?

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PADMA:

HOW CAN THERE BE WARMTH
WITHOUT THE SUN?

HOW LONG CAN I ENDURE THIS?
HOW LONG?

THE SNOW FALLS!
THE WIND BLOWS!
IT CARRIES ME AWAY!

WILL THIS WINTER STORM
LAST FOREVER?
HOW LONG UNTIL I'M HOME,
WITH YOU?

WILL THIS WINTER STORM
STAY FOREVER?

PADMA: I believe you *Amma*. But, you're not really here. You're at home with our family. And, I'm... alone...

(Wind, snow.)

(A telephone rings.)

(PADMA yawns.)

MOTHER:

KICK THE FROST FROM YOUR FEET,
MAKE IT FEEL LIKE YOUR DANCING!
GIVE YOURSELF TO THE WIND,
IT WILL KEEP YOU ADVANCING!

WHEN YOU NEED REST
YOU CAN TAKE A BREAK.
IF THERE IS PAIN,
GENTLY SOOTHE THE ACHE.

THE SUN IS DECLINING,
WEATHER CONFINING,
YOUR HOME IS FAR AWAY.
THE END IS DISTANT,
BUT, STAY PERSISTENT!
YOU WILL BLAZE RIGHT THROUGH THIS
DAY!

WHEN YOU RISE AND SHINE!
RISE AND SHINE!
THERE IS ALWAYS LIGHT IN THE SKY
YOU CAN SEE IT THERE, IF YOU TRY!

FOLLOW THE LIGHT,
FOLLOW THE GLOW,
THIS ALL WILL PASS BEFORE YOU
KNOW!
RISE AND SHINE TO A BRAND NEW DAY!

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PADMA: *(sleepy)* Who's calling at this hour?

(A telephone rings.)
(PADMA picks up the phone.)

PADMA: *(sleepy)*Dr. Bandopadhyay, speaking.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER: Doctor! My apologies for the late call, *but we need your help! ...It's an emergency!*

TRANSITION MUSIC.

GABRIELLE: Air Marshal Padma Bandopadhyay, who had been sleeping only moments before, was now fully awake.

PADMA: *(now awake)* There's an emergency? What's happened?

RUSSIAN SOLDIER: The entire team refuses to work! They say the storm is too great!

PADMA: But, the research must continue, the *snow* must be shoveled. We'll be trapped here!

RUSSIAN SOLDIER: *That's what I said!* But, they will not listen to me, only you. *You* must speak to them! Inspire them with your words!

PADMA: But, I don't have any...//

RUSSIAN SOLDIER: Thank you, Doctor! I will go tell the others!

(The phone is hung up.)

PADMA: How can I inspire others, when I'm the one in need of inspiration?

(PADMA sighs.)

PADMA: What will I do?

UPBEAT MUSIC.

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GABRIELLE: Good question Padma... What *will* you do?
But, before we find out, let's first take a look at her options.... Will Padma choose option 1?

PADMA: If I ignore their phone calls someone else will make this speech.

GABRIELLE: Or, will she choose option 2?

PADMA: I'm transferring out of here! ...Where's the nearest beach?

GABRIELLE: Or, will she choose option 3?

PADMA: It seems impossible, but I know I can brave this storm.

GABRIELLE: Now that we can clearly see her options, which one do YOU think she will choose? Take a moment to think it over...

THINKING MUSIC.

GABRIELLE: Alright, got your answer? Now, let's find out which option Padma will choose...

MOTHER: Who was on the phone?

(PADMA gasps!)

PADMA: *Amma!* ...Listen. I've made my decision... and... I don't think I can...

(Music of the Northern Lights)

MOTHER: *(in great awe)* Padma! Look! Look at the sky!

PADMA: *(in great awe)* I can't believe it... The *Aurora Borealis!* Particles from the sun hit the North Pole, creating magnificent colors! When the sun is out we can't see the effect, but at nighttime...

MOTHER: At nighttime we can see the glow.

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MOTHER:
FOLLOW THE LIGHT,
FOLLOW THE GLOW,
AND, MELT AWAY THE ICY SNOW!

PADMA:
FOLLOW THE LIGHT,
FOLLOW THE GLOW,
...THE ICY SNOW!

(Intercom on.)

PADMA: Attention base personnel. I know this storm seems endless, and I know that spirits are low. But, please remember: this storm will pass. And, we will get through it together.

WE WILL RISE AND SHINE!
RISE AND SHINE!
THERE IS ALWAYS LIGHT IN THE SKY,
I CAN SEE IT THERE, RACING BY!
RISE AND SHINE!

WE WILL RISE AND SHINE!
RISE AND SHINE!
THERE IS ALWAYS LIGHT IN THE SKY,
I CAN SEE IT THERE, RACING BY!
RISE AND SHINE!

FOLLOW THE LIGHT
FOLLOW THE GLOW
AND, THIS WILL PASS BEFORE WE
KNOW!
RISE AND SHINE TO A BRAND NEW DAY!

FOLLOW THE LIGHT
FOLLOW THE GLOW
AND, THIS WILL PASS BEFORE WE
KNOW!
RISE AND SHINE TO A BRAND NEW DAY!

GABRIELLE: Air Marshal Padma Bandopadhyay was faced with a seemingly impossible situation. But, with the support of her family, and the strength of her spirit, she was able to brave the terrible storm.

So, the next time you're feeling stuck, I wonder, what will you do next?

KID'S CORNER MUSIC.

GABRIELLE: At the end of every episode we are featuring a very special guest star...*you!* Today we have Mirabel from the Book Power for kids podcast! On her podcast Mirabel and her family review books for kids!

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GABRIELLE & ERNIE: Hi, Mirabel!

GABRIELLE: Tell us all about your favorite historical woman!

MIRABEL: Hello my name is Mirabel I'm from Kissimee, FL, and I want to tell you about Mary Anning. Mary Anning was born on May 21st, 1799 in Lyme Regis, which is in England. She is most remembered for her hard work on paleontology and discovering lots of new things about it. She also found the first complete ichthyosaur skeleton. She inspires me because she worked hard on paleontology and never really gave up.

End of Episode.