

Creator's Personal Statement

I did not grow up knowing I was dyslexic.
I only knew that learning felt harder for me than it seemed to be for others.

I grew up in the tea gardens of rural India, in a world shaped by physical labor, discipline, and silence. From an early age, I was observant and inward. I asked questions I could not explain—to the sky, to myself—but I had no language for why reading, writing, and classroom instruction felt so disorienting. I was often told to try harder. I did.

Without understanding it, I began to teach myself how to survive. I learned by watching others, copying movements, repeating actions, and enduring quietly. I learned how to march by watching feet. I learned how to walk by imitating rhythm. I learned right from wrong long before I learned how to pass exams. Creativity—drawing, making things, shaping objects—became a private refuge, not a performance.

Strength entered my life first as endurance, not as metaphor. I chose difficulty instinctively. I ran at night. I carried heavy things. I took longer paths. When I later received a heavy Hercules Rockshock bicycle from my father, I was drawn to it not because it was impressive, but because it demanded effort. Riding it across rocky roads, rivers, and steep slopes taught me discipline when the classroom could not.

Only much later did symbols arrive.

As a teenager, I discovered the television series *Hercules*. For the first time, I saw strength represented not only as physical power, but as restraint, moral clarity, and compassion. Hercules did not teach me how to be strong. He reflected a strength I had already been building in silence. He became an inner question I asked myself in moments of doubt: *What is the right thing to do when no one is watching?*

It was only as an adult that I finally understood dyslexia—and realized that what I had been doing all along was self-teaching. I had not overcome my difference. I had adapted to it. In many ways, I had been shaped by it.

Hercules and Me is not a story about becoming extraordinary.

It is a story about surviving without explanation, learning without instruction, and recognizing—much later—that the strength I once borrowed from symbols was always my own.