



The Brittle Twins

Vijayakumar Thulasilingam

The arrival of the twin boys on the 6th of August 1963 at 8.18 and 8.22 AM in Kolar district of Karnataka state turned an ordinary day into a festival of joy. They were born at the American mission hospital in Kolar district. Two tiny cries echoed through the room like the sweetest music announcing the beginning of a new chapter in the family's story. Like two bright stars appearing together in the night sky the brothers brought double the happiness, double the hope and double the dreams. Their mother Sulochana was served with two eggs in the hospital.

The home once quiet, now pulsed with laughter, blessings and celebration as family and friends gathered to welcome the precious twins into the world.

Their tiny hands seemed to hold endless promise and their innocent eyes reflected a future filled with wonder. The home once quiet now pulsed with laughter, blessings and celebration as family and friends gathered together to welcome the precious twins into the world. They were named as Jai and Vijay. Though only four minutes separated their arrival into the world, those brief moments made Jai the elder and Vijay the younger. A mere four minutes on the clock, yet a distinction that would remain with them throughout their lives.

The twin boys entered the world together bound by the same first breath and the same tender hopes that surrounded their birth. Yet fate had written a difficult chapter into their story. They were born with marble bone disease, a rare condition that made their bones unusually dense and fragile.

Their father Thulasilingam was a fisheries scientist and mother Sulochana was a housewife. The Brittle twins started their Studies at Cochin in Kerala State. They studied from kindergarten to second standard at Kendriya Vidyalaya School. They stayed at Pullaipadi in Cochin. Cochin, the queen of the Arabian Sea unfolds like a timeless painting where history and nature meet in graceful harmony.

Every morning the Jai and Vijay's journey to the school in the cycle rickshaw was a small adventure filled with delight. Seated comfortably beside friends they watched the world awakened as the rickshaw rolled gently along the streets. Trees lined the roads like silent guardians, their leaves dancing in the sunlight. By the time the school gates came into view, the journey itself had already become one of the happiest parts of the day.

One daily morning in Pullaipadi when dark clouds draped the sky and raindrops danced merrily upon the earth. Vijay stepped outside his house to revel in the season's delight. The cool rain embraced him as he splashed through puddles, his laughter mingling with the rhythm of falling water. Lost in the carefree joy of childhood, he ran and played beneath the grey heavens.

But in a sudden and unexpected moment, happiness gave way to pain. A fall during the playful frolic left Vijay with a fractured left femur.

The rain continued to fall gently as if mourning the accident that had interrupted his innocent celebration.

Vijay's father, Thulasisingam rushed his injured son to the hospital, his heart weighted down in anxiety and hope in equal measure. After careful examination, the medical team opening their shutters, vendors arranging colorful heaps of fruits and vegetables, and customers beginning their days shopping. The market was a world of wonders for the boys. They delighted in the vibrant sights, the cheerful call of the vendors, and the rich aroma of fresh flowers, spices and snacks that filled the air.

Holding tightly to their father's bicycle, Jai and Vijay felt a special joy in those weekly journeys. To them the ride was more than a trip to the market - it was an adventure shared with their father, treasured Sunday ritual that filled their childhood with warmth, laughter and the unforgettable memories.

In the gentle glow of the evening, after a days' heat had faded and cool breeze drifted in from the sea, their father, Thulasilingam, would take the twin boys Jai and Vijay on one of their most cherished outings. Hand in hand with their father and mother, the boys would make their way to the waterfront, their hearts brimming with anticipation.

The motorboat ride was always the highlight of the evening. As the boat skimmed across the water, leaving silver ripples in

its wake, Jai and Vijay would gaze in wonder at the vast expanse before them. The salty breeze tousled their hair, and their laughter mingled with the rhythmic hum of the engine. Each ride felt like a small voyage into a magical world where the sea and sky met in the horizon.

After the ride, Thulasisingam would lead the boys to the famous Sealord Hotel, where another delight awaited them. Seated comfortably beside their father and mother, they would savour tasty snacks, and enjoy scoops of cold creamy ice cream.

For the twins every bite seemed sweeter, because it was shared in the company of their parents.

Those evenings became treasured chapters in their childhood - a time of adventure, affection and Vijay would accompany their mother, Sulochana to the temple, her small hands clasped in hers, as they made their way into the bustling streets. The temple with its soaring Gopuram and echoing chants, seemed to the twins a world apart from the ordinary. There, beneath the shade of ancient trees and amidst the fragrance of camphor and jasmine, stood the temple elephants resplendent in their adornments. Draped in richly embroidered caparisons, their forehead decorated with intricate patterns, and their necks adorned with tinkling bells, the majestic creatures exuded an air of quiet grandeur. Jai and Vijay would gaze upon them with wide eyes, wonder captivated, captivated by their gentle presence and regal bearing, while Sulochana offered her prayers in the sanctum. Those Friday visits lingered in the boy's memories like scenes from a cherished dream, woven with devotion, beauty and enduring warmth of a mother's companionship.

After Jai and Vijay completed their kindergarten, their father, Thulasisingam moved the family from the traditional lanes of Pullaipadi to Girinagar, a beautiful and peaceful colony that seemed to promise new beginnings. Nestled amidst tree lined

streets, and well-kept homes, Girinagar possessed a quiet charm that was different from the bustling neighbourhood they had left behind.

The mornings were filled with bird song, and the evenings were bathed in the golden glow of the setting sun.

To the young twins the move felt like the start of the adventure. Every road invited exploration, every colony held the possibility of a new friend, and everyday revealed something fresh and delightful.

From their very first year in school, the twin brothers, Jai and Vijay studied at Kendriya Vidyalaya. Every morning dressed neatly in their uniforms, they would board the school bus from Giri Nagar colony and set off on their daily journey filled with excitement and wonder of childhood.

When the bus brought them home in the evening, another joyful ritual awaited them. Their neighbour, Mini Kutty, would eagerly watch for their arrival, her face lighting up the moment she saw the twins. With affection and generosity, she welcomed them each day with chocolates, a small gesture that filled their hearts with delight. Their imaginary worlds came alive as toy cars raced across the floor, dolls and action figures became characters in grand adventures, and every game unfolded into a new story. The sound of their cheerful voices echoed through the house, creating memories that would remain treasured long after those carefree childhood days had passed.

During the school days Jai and Vijay, attended tuition classes at home for Hindi and social studies. Every evening as the tuition master arrived carrying his books and his ever-present cane that symbolized discipline, the twins would settle down for their lessons.

While Vijay listened attentively Jai's mischievous spirit was forever seeing adventure. The moment and opportunity presented itself he would quietly whisk away the tuition

master's cane and hide it in some secret corner of the house. When the teacher later reached for it, he would be greeted by an empty space and a puzzled expression. All the while, Jai would struggle to suppress his laughter, his eyes sparkling with amusement as he watched the unfolding drama. Eventually, the missing cane would be discovered and the room would erupt in laughter, even as the tuition master tried to maintain his stern demeanor.

Every afternoon when the school bell announced during the lunch break, Sulochana would make her way to the school carrying a tiffin carrier filled with home-cooked food. With a mother's affection shining in her eyes, she would search for her twin sons, Jai and Vijay among the bustling crowd of children. Seating them under the shade of a tree or along a quiet corridor, she would lovingly serve each morsel, ensuring they are well. For the twins those precious moments more than just a meal, they were a daily reminder of their mother's boundless care and devotion, a memory that remained etched in their hearts long after their school days had passed.

In those days ducks were a common sight in Girinagar, wading leisurely along the lanes and filling the air with their cheerful quacking.

Every morning vendor would gather in front of Sulochana's house with baskets brimming with fresh vegetables and fish. Stepping out with a smile Sulochana would carefully inspect the days produce selecting the freshest greens and the finest catch for her family. The lively chatter of the vendors, the fluttering ducks. And bustle of the neighborhood combined to create a scene rich with the simple charm of everyday life.

During the summer vacation following the first year of school Thulasisingam would take his family on a much-awaited trip to Bangalore. The journey began at Cochin where they boarded an afternoon train bound for the bustling city. As the train rolled through lush countryside, crossed rivers, and

passed sleepy stations, the twin brothers Jai and Vijay gazed through the windows, captivated by the ever changing scenery. Their mother Sulochana lovingly cared for them throughout the journey serving home packed meals and ensuring their comfort. To the young boys, the train ride itself was an adventure filled with entertainment and wonder.

By the following morning the train would arrive in Bangalore, where the family was warmly welcomed by Thulasisingam Sister, Suseela A spinster of independent spirit, Suseela worked as a curator in the state fisheries department and lived in Gandhinagar. Her modest home soon became a place of joy and discovery for the twins.

Delighted by the presence of her nephews Suseela would take Jai and Vijay on excursions to Janatha Bazaar, where the lively shops and colourful displays fascinated the young boys. On special occasions she would accompany them to the exhibitions organized by the fisheries department, where visitors could learn about aquatic life and sample freshly prepared fish dishes. These outings opened a new world of sights, sounds, and experiences for the twins.

At home, Jai and Vijay spent many happy hours playing cricket in the open ground- floor area, their laughter echoing through the building as they improvised wickets and chased imaginary victories. Suseela took keen interest in their wellbeing and would also escort them to the renowned Minto eye hospital for their regular eye checkups, ensuring that their health received the same care and attention as their education.

From Suseelas house in Gandhinagar, the twin brothers, Jai and Vijay, would often accompany their mother, Sulochana on visits to the home of Saroja aunty. A respected educator, Saroja served as the head mistress of the local girls' higher secondary school and was known for her warm hospitality and affectionate nature. Saroja aunty took great pleasure in preparing special sweets and delicacies for her guests. The

aroma of freshly made treats would fill the house, creating an atmosphere of comfort and joy. She would serve every dish generously adorned with fragrant ghee, believing that food prepared with love should also be served with abundance.

The twins eagerly looked forward to these visits, delighting in the delicious sweets and the savoury dishes that appeared before them. As they sat together around the dining table, listening to the conversations of the elders and enjoying Saroja aunty's culinary creations, they experienced the simple happiness of the family, friendship and hospitality.

From Saroja aunty's house the family would often continue their visits to the home of Radhakrishnan, the beloved brother of both Saroja aunty and Suseela aunty. His house was always filled with warmth, laughter and the cheerful voices of children. Radhakrishnan lived there with his two sons Ramesh and Uday, and his daughter Vani.

For the twin brothers Jai and Vijay these visits were occasions of great entertainment. The moment they arrived, they would join Ramesh and Uday for spirited games of cricket.

Armed with makeshift bats and boundless enthusiasm, the boys transformed every open space into a cricket ground. Their laughter echoed through the neighborhood as they bowled, batted, and chased the ball under the bright Bangalore sun.

One fine afternoon, while a particularly energetic match was in progress, misfortune struck. In the midst of the game, Vijay suffered a fall and injured his right elbow. The pain was immediate and severe, bringing the joyful game to an abrupt halt. Concerned family members quickly attended to him, and he was taken for medical treatment.

The doctors confirmed that his right elbow had been fractured. To ensure proper healing his arm was carefully set and enclosed in a plaster of Paris cast. Owing to the fragility of his bones, the healing process was slower than expected, and

Vijay had to endure nearly six weeks with his arm immobilized. For an active young boy who loved cricket and outdoor play, those weeks seemed endless.

Yet he bore the inconvenience, with remarkable courage, supported by his parents and his twin brother. He recovered gradually in six weeks.

After the children completed their second standard, their father, Thulasilingam was transferred to Chennai. News of his transfer was received with genuine sadness by his colleagues, who had come to admire and respect him over the years. As a mark of their affection, they organized a heartfelt farewell.

In the days leading up to his departure, each colleague took turns hosting the family for dinner, at their home turning the farewell into a week of warmth, camaraderie, and cherished memories. The generous hospitality and sincere good will of his friends made the leave - taking both memorable and deep living. A memorable journey from Cochin to Chennai.

When Thulasisingam received orders for his transfer, the family prepared for a long and memorable road journey from Cochin to Chennai in their faithful Herald car. The excitement was especially visible on the faces of the twin boys, Jai and Vijay, who looked upon the trip as a grand adventure rather than a simple change of residence.

As the Herald rolled out of Cochin in the soft light of dawn the family waved goodbye to familiar streets and cherished memories. The winding roads, lined with swaying coconut palms and emerald- green paddy fields unfolded like scenes from a moving picture. Jai and Vijay eagerly occupied the rear seat, their eyes fixed on the passing landscapes, counting bridges, rivers and distant fishing boats.

Their first major halt was at Mandapam, where they stayed in a comfortable guest house. Here, Thulasisingam, proudly showed his family the Mandapam camp, home to the renowned Central marine fisheries research facilities. The

boys watched with fascination as fishermen brought in their catch and learned about the rich marine life of the region. The cool sea breeze and the endless stretch of blue waters left a lasting impression on their young minds.

Continuing their journey southward, the family reached Tuticorin. From their guest house they could admire the bustling harbour, where giant ships stood anchored against the horizon. Jai and Vijay were thrilled by the sight of cranes lifting cargo and boats gliding across the sparkling waters. As evening descended, the harbour lights twinkled like countless stars, creating a magical scene that captivated the entire family.

The next memorable stop was Nagapattinam. Here they visited the magnificent Basilica of our lady of good health at Velankanni. The atmosphere of devotion and peace touched every member of the family.

They offered prayers, lit candles, and spent quiet moments reflecting within the sacred surroundings.

Laughter filled the Herald car as stories were shared, songs were sung and snacks were enjoyed along the way.

After ten unforgettable days on the road the familiar skyline of Chennai finally appeared before them. Tired yet happy, Thulasisingam and his family arrived at the new destination carrying not just luggage but a treasure chest of memories. For Jai and Vijay, the journey from Cochin to Chennai was more than a relocation - it was an adventure filled with discovery, wonder, and family togetherness that they would cherish for rest of their lives.

After reaching Chennai, the twin brothers Jai and Vijay were admitted to Asan memorial senior secondary school in std three. The new city, the new school, and the new surroundings soon became familiar. The brothers grew together, studied together, and shared countless memories as they progressed through their school years. Life moved along smoothly, and

the twins completed their studies Up to standard 10 without any major difficulties. However fate had a different plan for them when they entered standard 11.

One rainy evening, as dark clouds hung low over the city and heavy showers drenched the streets, Vijay stepped out of his house. The ground had become dangerously slippery.

In a moment of misfortune he lost his footing and fell heavily. The fall resulted in a severe fracture of his right femur, the strongest bone in the human body.

Vijay was immediately taken to the hospital, where he came under the expert care of Dr Soundrapanadian.

The injury was serious, and he had to undergo pin traction, remaining confined to bed for nearly three months. The once energetic boy now spent his days staring through hospital windows, watching life move on outside while he patiently endured pain and treatment.

As though one tragedy was not enough, destiny dealt another blow to the family barely a month later.

During an inter-School cricket match at Asan memorial school Jai met with a devastating accident. While attempting an athletic play on the field he fell awkwardly sustaining, three fractures simultaneously -on in his right hip, another in his left elbow and a third in his collar bone. The promising cricket match ended abruptly, and Jai was rushed to the General government hospital, the very hospital where Vijay was undergoing treatment.

The sight of both twin brothers occupying hospital beds in the same institution filled their parents with deep anxiety. Yet the family remained united and hopeful.

Jai came under the care renowned orthosurgeon Dr Shanmugasundaram whose skill and experience were widely respected. After careful evaluation surgery was performed successfully. The road to recovery was long and demanding.

Weeks of pain, physiotherapy and perseverance followed. Yet Jai faced every challenge with remarkable resilience.

For nearly three months the twins shared a unique bond forged through adversity. They encouraged one another, celebrated small improvements, and drew strength from each other's presence. What could have been a period of despair gradually became a lesson in courage, patience and determination.

By the grace of God, the dedication of their doctors, and the loving support of their family, both brothers eventually recovered. They returned to their studies with renewed confidence and a deeper appreciation for life. The year that had begun with promise and ended in hardship became one of the most unforgettable chapters in the story of the twin brothers, Jai and Vijay- a testament to the strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

After completing their schooling, Jai and Vijay, stepped into a new chapter of life by pursuing their undergraduate and postgraduate studies at a college in Thorapakam. The years of higher education passed with determination, hard work and dreams of building successful careers. Upon completing their studies Jai secured a position as accounts assistant in Hindustan antibiotics ltd, Chennai. The appointment marked the beginning of a promising professional journey. Both the twins lost their father Thulasisingam. The entire family was deeply shocked. Vijay, too, found success, and was appointed as assistant, in the life insurance corporation of India. The twin brothers who had shared countless experiences, since childhood, were now carving their own paths, in the bustling city.

For three years Vijay carried out his duties with sincerity and dedication.

Life seemed to be moving along a steady course until fate intervened unexpectedly. One busy morning while boarding a

crowded bus on his way to office, he lost his footing and fell awkwardly. The accident resulted in a severe fracture of his right elbow.

He was immediately rushed for medical attention and underwent emergency surgery performed by skilled orthopaedic surgeon Dr Senthil Kumar. The injury proved particularly challenging because of the brittleness of his bones, which slowed the healing process considerably. Weeks turned into months as Vijay patiently endured pain, physiotherapy, and restricted movement.

The road to recovery was long and demanding. Supported by his family, friends and medical team, he persevered through every difficulty.

Nearly two months passed before he gradually regained strength and resumed his normal activities. The experience tested his resilience, but it also strengthened his resolve, reminding him that life's journey is often marked not only by achievements but also by the courage to overcome unexpected setbacks.

As years passed Vijay's dedication and efficiency at work earned him recognition and steady advancement in his career. He was elevated to the post of senior assistant and posted to a rural branch at Ponneri.

After serving there for two years he was transferred to zonal office at Chennai. After serving for about a year on request he was transferred to Chinnamalai branch office near his home. His hard work and commitment did not go unnoticed, and he was soon elevated to the position of Asst. Administrative officer at City branch x on Annasalai. It was a proud milestone reflecting the perseverance and sincerity that has marked his professional journey from the very beginning.

While serving at branch X Vijay entered a new chapter in his life through marriage. In due course he and his wife Kalpana

were blessed with a daughter, whose arrival filled their home with joy and laughter.

One evening, after completing a days' work at branch X Vijay boarded a bus for his journey home. As he was getting down from the bus amidst the rush of commuters, he lost his balance and slipped. In an instant he fell heavily on the road. The accident resulted in a fracture of his right ankle bone causing severe pain and rendering him unable to walk.

Medical examination confirmed the fracture, and his leg was immobilized in a plaster of Paris cast. Once again Vijay found himself confined to rest and dependent on the care and support of his family. The injury disrupted his daily routine and professional commitments, but he faced the setback with patience and courage.

Weeks of rest, careful treatment and gradual rehabilitation followed. Fortunately the fracture healed steadily, and within two months he was able to regain normal mobility. Emerging from yet another physical ordeal, Vijay returned to his duties with renewed confidence.

After completing three years of dedicated service, Vijay was transferred to the Adyar branch. His sincerity and commitment soon earned him another posting to the Velachery branch. Wherever he worked he won the respect of both colleagues and customers through his diligence, integrity and tireless efforts.

Recognising his hard work, the management promoted him to the cadre of Administrative officer and posted him to the Villupuram branch.

It was a proud milestone in his career. However, fate had yet another challenge in store for him.

Barely a month after joining the new branch Vijay met with a serious accident that resulted in major fractures to left femur and hip bone.

He was rushed by ambulance to Chennai where he came under the expert care of Dr Shanmugasundaram,

a renowned orthopedic surgeon. After a successful operation and months of careful treatment, Vijay endured a long period of recovery. Through patience, determination, and unwavering family support he gradually regained his strength and returned to normal life after nearly seven months.

Following his recovery Vijay was transferred from Villupuram to head office at Chennai. There he continued to serve with the same dedication that had marked his entire career.

Years passed, after rendering nearly six years of service, at the Head office, another unexpected tragedy struck. One morning while hurrying to catch a metro train in Mylapore, Vijay suffered a severe fall that caused multiple fractures. Once again, an ambulance rushed him to the hospital, where he was admitted to Bharathiraja hospital. Under the skilled care of Dr Arumugam he underwent hip replacement surgery and began yet another arduous journey towards recovery.

The months that followed tested his resilience, but Vijay's indomitable spirit never wavered. With steadfast determination and the support of his loved ones he overcame the ordeal and regained his health after approximately six months.

After serving for nearly two years, Vijay was transferred to the customer relationship department. He settled into his new responsibilities with the same dedication and sincerity that had marked his entire career. However, fate which had tested him, repeatedly, throughout his life, had yet another challenge in store.

A couple of years later, while at work, Vijay accidentally slipped and fell on rolling chair in his department. The fall was severe and resulted in fractures to both his hands. His colleagues and department Manager immediately rushed to his aid. Since the department was located on the fourth floor,

they carefully carried him on a stretcher to the ground floor before arranging for his urgent transfer to Prashant hospital Velachery.

At the hospital Vijay came under the expert care of Dr Sashidharan, an orthopedic surgeon.

Medical examination revealed the seriousness of his injuries, and he underwent major surgery in both the hands. He remained hospitalized for nearly three weeks enduring pain and uncertainty with remarkable courage.

After being discharged Vijay was advised complete rest. Months of physiotherapy followed as he carefully worked to regain strength and movement in his hands. Recovery was slow and demanding, taking nearly eight months. Yet, true to his resilient nature Vijay persevered through every. Obstacle.

A month before his retirement, he finally recovered sufficiently to rejoin the office. His return was warmly welcomed by his colleagues, who admired his determination and indomitable spirit.

When the day of retirement arrived he was given a heartfelt farewell surrounded by friends and coworkers who celebrated his long years of dedicated service.

Sadly, not long after Vijay's retirement his beloved twin brother, Jai passed away.

The loss left a deep void in Vijay's life for the brothers had shared not only a remarkable bond but also a lifetime of joys, sorrows and struggles.

The story of twin brothers is one of extraordinary endurance. Throughout their lives Vijay and Jai faced countless hardships caused by their brittle bones, suffering repeated fractures and prolonged periods of pain. Yet they never surrendered to adversity. Their lives stand as a testament to courage, perseverance and the strength of human spirit in the face of relentless challenges.

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