

In a small town in India **SANJAY MANNAN** is a 40 year old factory worker who has unrealized ambitions of becoming a record holder in the Guinness Book of World Records. It has been his life-long dream to bring honour and recognition to his family. His wife **ANIKA** and daughters put up with his many entertaining yet fruitless attempts to set a world record and they secretly, collectively hope that he will soon stop making the effort altogether.

On the 20th of July 1987 Anika gives birth to a son. Sanjay names him **GUINNESS**.

From the moment he enters the world Guinness is on the path of a pre-determined destiny as his father begins to cultivate physical and mental features that may make his son eligible for entering the Guinness Book of Records. However, no matter what he tries, Longest Hair, Earliest to Walk, Memorizing Pi, fate (or his sisters) constantly intervenes to thwart the attempt. His mother loves him just the way he is but Sanjay is lovingly disappointed that the boy has only ten toes!

*On the other side of the world in London a representative for the Guinness Book of World Records, **COLIN**, has concluded that Matej Gaspar, born in Yugoslavia on the 20th of July 1987 is not the 5 Billionth person born as claimed by the United Nations. His partner **DECLAN**, although sceptical, begins a conversation and a search with Colin that lasts many years across many countries in a parallel story to Guinness' life.*

The early years of Guinness' life is a series of world record attempts that involve the entire Mannan family but all the focus is on him.

In the family home Guinness is being measured by his Uncle **RAJ** for the length of his eyelashes, hair and fingernails. The room is filled with the relatives listening to Guinness recite the English alphabet backwards while being measured. His grandmother, Dadi, is upset that they are speaking English but it is the first of many cultural influences from the West that have an impact on their lives. Guinness has a strong bond with his sisters and they often make light of these situations by singing pop songs from the 80s. When the room dissolves into singing, laughter and dancing to George Michael and Aretha Franklin's 'I Knew You Were Waiting' Sanjay looks on in disbelief before raising his voice and ending the fun.

By the time he is aged 8 his school teacher has begun to notice that Guinness is often tired from all of the after-school training that he does for world records and an incident in class draws attention to the fact that his regular studies maybe suffering. When the bell rings before the end of the day he runs out of the class with his two best friends **KRISH** and **NAREEV** and they are excited to get into his uncle Raj's car where they have a conversation about daydreaming and Raj inspires them with his plan to become a DJ at the local radio station.

When Guinness is 9 he is submerged in a bath that is filled with ice, holding his breath, his sisters sit beneath a sink in the corner and watch in silence. An alarm clock is suspended just above his eyeline and it is only the sound of ticking that can be heard until he bursts from under the water at the same time as his Mother bursts through the door. Not having reached the time goal set by his father, Guinness leaves the bathroom but can still hear his parents arguing. Anika believes Sanjay is working him too hard and that they should recognize that he is developing other interests in poetry and music. Sanjay, carrying pressure from a hard day at work, thinks that they should push harder, focus on his 'gift' and help him fulfil his destiny.

At the age of 10 Guinness, Nareev and Krish identify that they have only 22,000 days left in their lives if all goes well. They create a countdown calendar and this sparks a conversation about whether or not he likes training with his father. Guinness says it is important but he has not been practicing for the endurance test of standing on a pole that will be his next attempt. No-one ever notices that his sisters have talents far beyond his or that his enthusiasm is waning.

7 years later Guinness and Sanjay are arguing about his grades in the family kitchen. Sanjay thinks they have been very close to success and must keep trying but Guinness questions this and suggests that perhaps he should be a teacher or a writer instead. As the argument reaches a new level of intensity Sanjay collapses.

The next day at a bus stop in town Guinness says an emotional goodbye to his mother and leaves the weight of expectation behind him.

Half a year later amongst the rice fields in China, Guinness is riding in the back of an old pickup truck writing a short story titled 'The Boy and the Moon'. The truck is driving through wide open space in the rice fields when it stops to pick up a group of American students who have run out of money on their way to Shanghai after visiting Basecamp at Mt Everest. Guinness makes a connection with one of the students named Valerie. She is opinionated and has a strong sense of humour. They are instantly attracted to each other. He introduces himself as Tom.

Two years later a cab pulls up outside a New York Diner as light snow is falling. Valerie and Guinness are looking well dressed and physically enmeshed. They get out but she accidentally leaves her bag in the cab before they are head into a fancy apartment block to meet her father. Although Guinness has not been speaking with his own family much since moving to New York the contrast between Valerie's father who is cold and distant and his own father who was loving yet relentless is obvious to him.

Living together in New York Valerie and Guinness fall more in love but Guinness is drifting as he explores the grim reality of working as a commercial writer. On a rare occasion of speaking to his mother and sister he hears that his friend Krish is unwell. He promises them he will call him later but forgets as he focusses on a 'big break' in a studio the next day.

Meanwhile, many years after their initial conversations, Colin and Declan, thanks to an algorithm developed by one of their co-workers at the Guinness Book of Records, believe that they have identified the true 5 billionth person ever born and are now heading to New York City themselves to notify that person.

In the new Millennium in India, Sanjay has become withdrawn during the years of not speaking with his son but he continues to quietly explore possible world record attempts.

At 11pm one night on a rooftop apartment in Brooklyn, Guinness is writing when he and Valerie enter into a heavy discussion about 'why are we here?', 'why he has not taken action with his "real" writing', and 'why has he never asked her to marry him?' He is overwhelmed but knows he is losing her through inaction. As she goes to tell him that she thinks they should take some time apart he looks down at his phone. Krish has died.

Running from his failure as a lover, a son, a writer and a friend Guinness receives advice in an uptown diner from a waitress and Valerie's father before deciding to drive to Florida in search of work and the opportunity to rebuild himself.

He is driving when his mother calls to inform him that he must get to his father who has secretly flown to New York to participate in the Guinness Book of World Records Day at the Javitz Centre in Manhattan where he intends to try one last time to set a risky world record.

Sanjay arrives at the Javitz Centre but not before long, amongst an incredible array of talents, human physical extremes and unusual people he is caught up in a sequence of events that appear to the rest of the world as a potential terrorist attack.

Guinness is stuck at the New Jersey entrance of the Lincoln tunnel when Valerie calls informing him of the situation that is unfolding and they speak briefly about what happened between them before she insists that she will get to him and he tells her to stay put. Guinness now begins to use the extraordinary skills he developed as a child to help in reach his father who is now trapped in a room underneath the Javitz Centre with 200 GBOR record breakers. His family in India are following the drama on the news and through contact with Valerie.

The GBOR adjudicators Colin and Declan have ended up in the chaos as well when Guinness uses his balancing ability and his powerful shouting voice to find his father who amongst the extreme chaos of people, machines and world record breaking creations has bonded with a Snake Woman , A Very Tall Man and a Tiny Lady as water begins to flood the room they are trapped in. Reunited, Guinness and his father use a 1963, Ferrari 250 GTO to hold the room from flooding to buy enough time for everyone else to escape.

Outside, news crews and emergency services look up to see a bizarre crowd of people running through the large glass structure straight towards them. There are people riding unicycles, carrying other people, pulling trolleys of rubber duckies and so much more! Inside Sanjay and his son acknowledge the final entanglement of their destinies and begin to hold their breath.

....And of course they come out safe but wet, Guinness and Valerie reconcile on the phone after she is put in jail for some illegal activity trying to get to the Javitz Centre, Sanjay returns home and sometime later receives a package to reveal the new Guinness Book of Records 20XX in all its shiny glory. The cover is a photo of the Very Tall Man and Tiny Lady in wedding outfits.

Sanjay holds it up like a new baby or a bible then places it on the table as the whole family gathers round. He turns the pages quickly and eventually lands on a page that has 'corrections' . The 5,000,000,000th Human is listed as Guinness Mannan born to Anika and Sanjay Mannan and 12:00am 11th July 1987.