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Easy Chic

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BABY!**

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- Breezy whites
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500
*dresses of
summer*

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ALIVE

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Denim Diaries:
**CARA
DELEVINGNE**

350+
Closet Crushes



Cotton blouse:
Kenneth Cole;
trench coat: Zara;
slim fit jeans: GAS;
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10/TRUE DETECTIVE

As the beloved sleuth *Byomkesh Bakshi* turns to Bollywood, we trailed Nidhi Jain, to see what goes into the making of a No 1 Lady Detective

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When other girls her age found their muses in long-legged plastic dolls, Nidhi Jain, 34, was taken by a small man with an egg-shaped head and a military moustache. Maybe it was her fascination with Agatha Christie's fictional character, Belgian detective Hercule Poirot, that kicked off her desire to unravel the truth. Or maybe it was her habit of constantly asking questions, and looking for and finding things as a child that nobody else could. Either way, it made the Noida resident change tracks from working with a bank to being the director of detective agency Sleuths India, helping solve thousands of cases in a decade-long career.

CRACKING THE CASE

The first case Jain solved came from an industrialist for what seemed a decent proposal for his daughter's hand in marriage. "He sought preliminary matrimonial investigation. Our task was to follow the movements of the groom," she says. "Startling revelations ensued. We got videos of the guy that proved he was already married, and yet, had multiple relations. He'd put up a suave disguise to marry wealthy women."

SAVING GRACE

"It's exciting to walk into office not knowing what kind of cases we will get that day," says Jain. People come to Sleuths India who have 200 detectives on board along with a countrywide network of 40,000 informants, to look into all kinds of matters. So, Jain might be investigating a murder in the morning, a matrimonial dispute in the afternoon and a business fraud or skip-tracing (finding missing people) in the evening. "It's important to be detached though the cases are bound to affect you on some level," she tells us. "One case that

remains with me involved a married man who would fake his identity to get closer to innocent girls, then take their nude pictures and blackmail them. We laid a trap through which the cops could catch him red-handed, and save the lives of 18 suicidal girls. Such instances make you feel grateful for being given an opportunity to help women."

I SPY

When Jain first told her parents she wanted to be a detective, it was categorically rejected. "I come from a conservative family where a good MBA degree followed by a plum job is what's expected from women," she says. "But after the successful execution of complex cases, they are now comfortable with it. Being a female detective works in your favour as people are eager to confide in you, and you can ask questions and glean information easily." On the personal front, however, strangers are often taken aback when introduced to her. "On one hand, they ask hundreds of questions about me but on the other, they're hesitant to reveal details of their own," she laughs. "At my end, I instinctively find myself judging them and following their body language. If something stikes me as suspicious, I might be tempted to sniff around a little." Can it not get exasperating to look at the world with a constant shade of distrust? "Oh yes. The private details I'd come across would shock me earlier. But now, after knowing the most discreet details of people's lives, nothing really jolts me anymore."

GLAM DOLL. NOT.

"Being a detective is often looked upon as being glamorous or fun as shown in movies like *Bobby Jasoos*," says Jain. "It's not. There are cases in which your personal safety is at stake. There was one that involved a gang that would dupe wealthy senior citizens into parting with their money under the guise of investing it. At one point in our sting operation, I was with someone from the gang who had a gun, and accomplices with arms on the other side of the door. We did manage to secure enough evidence to help the cops nab them. Despite such situations, I go home happy every single day. I look at this as my way of contributing to society." ■