

From one catastrophic interview to a quest for 1000, Hina spins her failures into a lingerie empire, crafting a tale of humor, surprise, and self-discovery.

The Girl With a Thousand Interviews

By Giorgi Lebanidze

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THE GIRL WITH A THOUSAND INTERVIEWS

"Not here for the job offer—I'm here to take over."

GIORGI LEBANIDZE

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Chapter I:

Holding Fast to This One

"You're fresh from academia's embrace, so what makes you think the corporate world is ready for you?" Mr. Knowitall began, a sly twinkle in his eyes.

My nerves were taut. I cleared my throat and answered. "Well, my student job taught me a lot about..."

Ms. Sharpnose just smiled benignly. "Oh, those quaint student jobs! They're rather like preludes, aren't they? Important, yet hardly the main performance."

I resisted the urge to raise an eyebrow. "True, but those preludes have given me great insights into..."

Mr. Knowitall then gently interrupted, "Insights? Interesting word choice. Don't you feel that real-world challenges might differ a little from... just college-level insights?"

Struggling to retain my composure, I replied, "Absolutely, but they provide a foundation, a starting point to..."

Ms. Sharpnose now looked genuinely curious after interrupting again - "And how do you suppose these foundational experiences will transition to our setting here?"

I felt a knot of frustration and self-doubt tightening in my chest. Words failed me—three points, no, four—yet they slipped through my grasp like sand. Was this interview meant to break me down, to strip me of my confidence? Was the corporate world

always so merciless? Had I somehow misstepped, or was this just the harsh reality? My previous student job interviews had been straightforward, nothing like this. But here I was, feeling small and inadequate. Choosing silence, I shifted my focus to my body language, unable to shake the sense of unease settling over me–I started moving instead.

As I fumbled to gather my belongings, Mr. Knowitall continued, this time in a contemplative tone, "You know, it's truly eye- opening when we encounter someone so... so steadfastly anchored to their collegiate days."

Ms. Sharpnose, adjusting her glasses and sharing a subtle glance with Mr. Knowitall, further mused, "Indeed, it's somewhat endearing. Like watching a child clutching their favorite toy on the first day of school, uncertain of the bigger playground they are entering."

I hesitated at the door, their comments echoing in my mind. Were they offering help or just poking fun? The embarrassment pinched at me. I quietly said, "Thank you," quickly exited, eager to leave yet feeling the burden of their remarks linger as I stepped out into the corridor, trying to shake off the unease and confusion that clung to me.

Outside, it felt like the city turned up the volume just to laugh at my newbie blunders. The sun was throwing down heat like it was going out of style, but the real sweat? That was courtesy of that intense interview room vibe. And about those nicknames, Mr. Knowitall and Ms. Sharpnose? Yeah, they might sound like rejects from a Disney cartoon, but trust me, they're spot-on. In the grand lineup of quirky characters I've met, these tags are more real than their actual names.

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That evening, I was tempted by the charm of ballroom dancing—a fresh adventure for me, straying from my usual cozy house parties. Lilly, always chasing unique experiences, had sold it to me as something glittering with potential. But post-interview fiasco, my excitement had definitely cooled off. Looks like the dance floor would have to wait.

After the grind of another day, I stumbled into our flat, my heels chattering against the tiles like a Morse code message for "S.O.S.". Michael, my flat mate, glanced up from his video game, a raised eyebrow asking his lips didn't dare to.

"Did the world chew you up and spit you out, or what?"

"It spat alright," I replied, heading to the sink. If only the day's disappointments could be scrubbed off like last night's mascara.

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Interviews,
HR Departments,
Talking,
Jobs,
Can my head think about different topics?
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Dinner was a plate of mushroom risotto, as comforting as a hug from the inside out. I plopped down in front of the TV, hoping to drown my sorrows in the fickle currents of StreamScape. Halfway through some crime drama, my room started winking at me from the corner of my eye. Michael, ever the empath, gave a knowing nod as I trudged off. Once tucked away in my solitude chamber, my ears picked up the TV's muted chatter, and I found myself reaching for my phone.

Whipping through social media felt like attending a masquerade ball, everyone wearing "my life is perfect" masks. My

interview faux pas suddenly felt like a wardrobe malfunction on the red carpet. I shifted gears and tapped out a few key phrases into the search bar: "Surviving job interviews, " "What NOT to drop in an interview like a hot potato, ", and "Do all interviewers have a master's degree in sarcasm?" Tips, tales, and pity parties flooded in, as if I had opened the floodgates to the 'Land of Failed Interviews'.

After a long day of job hunting and dance video binging, I slumped into dreamland to the soundtrack of the city. My cozy bed and I became one as I let the day's drama dissolve. But then, morning sunshine, like a spotlight, rudely interrupted my peaceful slumber. Groggily, I realized it was market day. I shimmied into my trusty old jeans and a tee that should've retired ages ago, then whipped up a smoothie that hinted at today's fresh produce. Michael, my bill splitting mate and resident coffee-addict, was already brewing his morning lifeline.

"Going to dazzle 'em at the market today?" he teased, with a wink. "Oh, please grab me some of that basil, will ya?"

"Ja natürlich," I responded and quickly ran.

As I cycled to the market, Sacramento's streets stretched out wide before me. Tower Bridge was a familiar sight, its silhouette towering in the distance, and an early-bird street musician strummed a tune, the notes floating in the air like a morning greeting.

Once I arrived at the market, my to-do list unraveled. My stall, a patchwork of colors, was a reflection of both the bounty of nature and a college student's budgeting skills. Unrolling the canopy, setting up crates, and artfully displaying produce — every

tomato, every leafy green, was placed with precision and a dash of pride. The market wasn't just about sales; it was an exchange of stories, recipes, and sometimes, life advice. My regulars would often linger, discussing the best way to sauté zucchini or the secret to creating a hearty salad.

Surrounded by the captivating aroma of fresh strawberries and the jovial atmosphere created by my fellow growers, the mishaps from yesterday now felt almost funny. Everywhere I looked, I heard another exchange of laughter or a teasing joke, reminding me that life often has its ups and downs.

The day's first task was always the small mountain of apples that needed sorting. I'd always pick each one up, checking for bruises or imperfections, brushing away any dirt with a cloth, and then place it into one of the three wooden bins that said: "Perfect", "Slightly Blemished", or "For Juicing".

As I became engrossed in my apple-checking, Mrs. Henderson, one of our regulars, approached with her characteristic swagger.

"I swear, every week you're here trying to hide the best ones from me!" she accused in jest, a smirk on her face.

I laughed, "Well, Mrs. Henderson, I've got to keep you on your toes." I reached for a particularly rosy specimen. "This one's just been harvested. Perfect for one of your legendary pies, I'll wager."

She squinted at the apple, then at me, playful suspicion in her eyes. "Hmm, looks almost good enough. But remember, my pies are only as legendary as the apples that go in them. So, no skimping on quality, young lady!"

I saluted mock-seriously, "Understood, Ma'am. Only the best for Mrs. Henderson's pies."

After Mrs. Henderson completed her apple transaction, I returned to my task of carefully arranging all the apples in a neat line. The work was normally tedious, but it was moments like mine with Mrs. Henderson that made it enjoyable. Given the cheerful interaction between vendors and customers, the labor was more than worth my time.

After pocketing my day's earnings, I sauntered through Sacramento's bustling streets, letting the city's rhythm wash over me. Then the serene moment was broken by my phone's insistence. It buzzed, it rang, and judging by the "Abigail-calling" tone, it seemed like it had been doing so for at least an eon... or maybe it was just eighteen seconds. Dread filled me, not because of the call, but because that jingle was the unofficial anthem of our 'Workout Evenings.' Abigail's fervent dedication to fitness was infectious, so under normal circumstances, I'd be gearing up to break a sweat. But today was anything but 'normal.'

As I took a deep breath and swiped to answer the call, a borderline hysterical voice screeched from the other end,

"HINA!!! I've been circling the cafeteria like a hawk for the last fifteen minutes. Where are you?!" Instead of embarking on the treacherous path of explanations and justifications, I opted for brutal honesty.

"Abby, I'm bailing on today's burpees and squats," I declared.

Then, in a voice dripping with faux tragedy, she sighed, "Fine, traitor. But don't think you're escaping me completely. Meet me downtown, later. Michael's tagging along." The deal, of course,

sealed. I continued my leisurely stroll, wondering if the universe would throw any more curveballs my way this day.

For two hours, I strolled around the park, my phone practically glued to my hand as I mulled over self-help articles and interview tips like a broken record. By the time the sun decided to clock out, I joined Abby and Michael for dinner. Our meal felt more like a sprint than a chill gathering, as everyone seemed to have places to go and food to digest. Amidst the food marathon, Michael, ever the comedian, dished out his usual blend of self-tease and complimenting others. His specialty? Joking about his love life. But his current love, Dan, was a tough nut to crack.

Dan was a trifecta of sophistication, smarts, and sportsmanship (yeah, one of those football hotshots). Tough to make fun of someone when they're a hair's breadth away from being an action figure. But we had faith. Michael's wit was like a bloodhound, always sniffing out the laughs. And sure enough, he delivered.

"The hardest part about going out with Dan?" Michael started, his face twisting into a mock pondering look. "It's keeping up with his morning face ritual. Seriously, it's like he's prepping for surgery. I get moisturizing, but this guy's skincare regime is more complex and guarded than the secret formula of a cola brand!" Amidst our howling laughter, the nearby tables seemed divided between annoyance and amusement at our little comedy club.

Even in the intense realm of modern skincare obsession, Michael had found his comedic gold. It was a real talent. How could he turn the mundane into something so hilariously noteworthy? I suppose in some way, it was his way of coping–finding humor, even when things seemed humorless. And today, of all days, I

needed that laugh more than ever. Our escapade through downtown unfurled as neon lights played across the towering monuments of corporate might.

Looking at the buildings, I blurted out, "Ever think about how some folks up there in high-rises might just be getting paid for looking busy?"

"A what?" Michael replied, raising an eyebrow as if I'd told him I'd seen a UFO. Abby just rolled her eyes like she was watching a rerun of a show she didn't like.

"Isn't it wild?" I continued, making my best impression of a dramatic TV host. "Some kid's working two jobs, running around like a headless chicken, earning just enough to cover rent. Then there's Mr. Big Shot, in his fancy office," I pointed straight up to emphasize, "makes a few calls, taps on Excel, and voila! He's swimming in money."

Michael just looked at me, completely baffled, while the only response from the city was a distant car horn. I could see the wheels turning in their heads, debating whether I was on to something important or just having another of my strange 'moments'.

Michael sighed, giving the towering buildings a long look. "It's not just about the surface," he mused, "Hard work doesn't always equal big bucks yes, but" After a brief pause, he switched gears, "Anyway, how was bowling with Adrianna and Derrek? Was Adrianna cool?"

"She was... sympathetic about Martha's ordeal, but love's a tricky beast," I replied.

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Michael snorted, "Love my ass. It's barely been a month!" Then, circling back to our original discussion, he added, "And those execs up high? They've got their own battles. Not physical, sure, but the stress of decisions, office politics, it's a different kind of weight."

Abby, now drawn into the conversation, nodded. "It's a bit like apples and oranges."

Michael grinned. "More like comparing apple pies to orange juice. Both take an effort, but they're not the same beast."

"But isn't more paycheck always better?" I challenged.

Michael, after a thoughtful silence, ventured, "Maybe it's about finding the right formula after all."

"A Formula?" Abby giggled. "Oh, not the infamous 'formula' again!"

Michael playfully scolded her, "Okay, okay, madam, life isn't math, but maybe it borrows a formula or two from it."

His typical jest was laced with an unexpected gravity. "You see, the world doesn't come with an instruction manual for fairness. There's no universal tutorial for fairness either," he explained, a thoughtful furrow forming on his brow. "We're left to navigate this on our own, wrestling with questions of equitable wages and what it means to be genuinely decent people. It's all about finding the right formula, discovering that elusive balance that harmonizes our personal ethics with the broader societal scales. That, my friends, is the crux of the matter."

Our eyes met, Abby's and mine, sharing a look of mutual discovery, as if we'd stumbled upon something entirely new.

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Fairness,
Formula,
Balance,
Paycheck? How are these interconnected, along with success?

As the evening's conversation mellowed into the night's serenity, Abby, true to her role as my personal cheerleader, made me pledge, "Gym, no bailing out the day after tomorrow." She declared the upcoming day a "Slacking Day," a golden opportunity to delve into the world of comic books, a newfound curiosity of mine.

Yet, amidst this laid-back planning, a persistent notion lingered in my mind: the concept of 'the right formula.' This notion shadowed my thoughts, even as I pounded away on the gym's treadmill, sparking a deep internal dialogue. "How do I evolve from being merely another employee to someone wielding genuine influence, without transforming into one of those uptight, those who have lost their true selves, those execs we often criticize?"

Chapter II: Belle Epoch Envy

Post workout. As the bright city lights streaked past the window on our ride home, my brain was in overdrive: *There's got to be a way to skip the mortifying interviews and sidestep the pitfalls. A way to reign over my destiny.*

As I flung my shoes off, preparing to dive into the enticing world of StreamScape, a thought struck me with the force of a lightning bolt:

'Hold on a sec... maybe the answer isn't finding someone else's path but creating my own. Entrepreneurship.' The idea of crafting the 'right formula', or at least stumbling upon it, began to resonate more and more. I mulled over this revelation, turning it over in my mind again and again, trying to piece together what this meant for me. It wasn't just a onetime epiphany; I revisited the thought, scrutinizing it, challenging it, and gradually, it began to solidify. That was it! My own path. The concept didn't arrive fully formed; it was honed through repeated contemplation, each iteration bringing me closer to a definitive direction.

Ah, life. It's a bit like a sitcom without a laugh track, isn't it? Here I am, 24 days in (Yes, I'm keeping a tally.)—you'd expect some grand revelation, some earth-shattering epiphany about my next big move. I've been on a quest, a deep dive into the murky waters of self-reflection, trying to figure out my 'What Now?' You know, those moments of profound thought squeezed in between binge-watching sessions on StreamScape (hey, a girl needs her downtime). But guess what? I'm still out here, playing detective in

the mystery of the 'right formula.' It's elusive, like that last piece of pizza you were sure you had in the fridge but can't seem to find.

The days morphed into a seamless blend of moments. Work. Stroll. Sweat it out at the gym. Crash at home. Gab with friends. And occasionally sprinkle in a few oh-so-enthusing discussions about impending graduation with my fellow students. Glamorous, wasn't it? Two job interviews winked at me from my calendar, but I promptly cancelled them. Why? Because the siren song of entrepreneurship was suddenly proving too seductive to ignore.

Now, before I lure you down the rabbit hole of my endless contemplations, let's fast forward, shall we? Social media was taking the world by storm. Everywhere you looked, someone was trying to 'influence' something. Some parlayed their newfound fame into shilling products, while others crafted their own unique merchandise. 'AHA!' I thought, 'That's my ticket.' Enter ClipClock: the hub for zippy, time-crisp video clips that had the masses hooked. Some of my 'well-intentioned' buddies even suggested I lean into my... let's say, 'physical assets' to lure the 'less cerebral' portion of the male populace. But really, they had instead just meant, 'Drop the sweater, show more skin, and watch the likes roll in. 'Oh, the depth of male predictability!' So, picture this picture. I skyrocket to fame, amass a whole million followers - I'd have brands slipping into my DMs, begging me to pose with their new lip gloss or fancy water bottle. Heck, I might even launch my own line of... cute cat socks? But before I got completely carried away with those daydreams...

I gave ClipClock a whirl. Big mistake. Within seconds, I realized it's the dumpster fire of an app. Who are these people getting their kicks from watching endless, mind-boggling 60-

second videos? And the very thought of me contributing to this madness? A hard pass. I am not committing any sin against humanity! - Deleted -!

But here's the twist - I couldn't ghost social media entirely. Like it or not, I had to set up camp on Facebook and Instagram. Every job, hobby, side gig, or Grandma's knitting club had a page these days. So, even if I don't become the most famous person on the Internet, at least I won't disappear into a void. It was time to create some precise, high-level Hina content... without any extra embellishments. The quest for that 'next big thing' had me burning the midnight oil and practically inhaling volumes of market trends. The public domain data, although fascinating, felt like I was only scratching the surface. So, in what can only be described as a "spur of the slightly mad moment," I forked over a whopping 780 smackers (yes, from my savings!) for specialized data from those ever-secretive data collection moguls.

The information sprawled before me like a cryptic jigsaw puzzle, demanding expert eyes. But who needs experts when you have the audacity of ambition (and a knack for winging it)? Armed with my self-proclaimed analytical prowess, I deciphered, deduced, and finally had the lightbulb moment I was seeking. I saw the breakthrough of creative-sales-on-demand and their potential...

It was vintage women's lingerie. Now, don't twist your eyebrows just yet. We're not talking here about picking up any ol' lacy number. My mission? Sourcing them from the farthest corners of the digital world and the mustiest aisles of local thrift shops. From kilo shops (where the loot is weighed, and the joy of thrifting is taken to an economical paradise) to exclusive

boutiques. My hunts often culminated in treasures like bras, bralettes, panties, corsets, and the elegant, yet saucy, bustier. The lineup also boasted of teddies, babydolls, camisoles, garter belts, and slips. That was just half the fun. The real magic started when I began to tweak them. Some received delicate knitting accents, while others got a splash of paint. Some bore evocative messages, taking the lingerie from mere attire to a powerful statement. The goal? Marry Edwardian elegance to a touch of modern audacity and vulgarity. Think Jane Austen meets Lady Gaga.

And so, my darling reader, what happened to this eccentric endeavor? It didn't just change my closet. It changed my life. Transforming mere lingerie into wearable art was no walk in the park. From refurbishing to recoloring, every piece became a canvas of creativity. Then came the digital frontier—establishing a social media presence and setting up an online store. My savings? Well, they bore the brunt of this endeavor, dwindling faster than a double dip ice cream cone on a summer day. But hey, what's the point of having savings if not to pour it into chasing one's passion and goal?

Michael, with his uncanny knack for strategy (and a seemingly endless reservoir of patience), also pitched in. He'd toss ideas about digital marketing while I'd furiously jot down notes, the two of us crafting an online empire for my revamped lingerie. Still, even with all the hustle and bustle, I still had to maintain my regular job. Those savings weren't going to replenish themselves, after all, and I had other bills to pay.

The clock ticked away, and thirty-seven industrious days later, my first collection made its online debut. No stone was left unturned in marketing my masterpieces. I became a one-woman

publicity machine, distributing posters, curating digital ads, and even sidestepping details like my long-past graduation. But hey, let's put a pin in that for now. Juggling the demands of my job with the burning ambition of my venture soon wore real thin. So, with a heavy heart, I handed in my notice. I could almost visualize Mrs. Henderson's vexed face, knowing she'd lost her trusted hand in curating the finest picks and her go-to hide-and-seek partner. Yet, as one door closed, new windows of opportunity flew open and sales notifications began trickling in, first in Sacramento, then throughout the county, and before I knew it, all across the Golden State.

So, with a mix of astonishment and pride, Michael remarked, "Wow, Hina, you're actually pulling it off!" And pull it off, I did.

It became my full-time job. My beloved word, sales, skyrocketed in a way that even my wildest dreams hadn't foreseen. Each passing day saw me diving headfirst into a whirlwind of creativity, giving my social media a facelift, and constantly refining my online store. In a matter of three months, I saw my bank account begin to expand, indicating that I was likely on the path to constructing a real empire. Mine.

Despite achieving this success, a nagging feeling remained. Have you ever felt like something is unfinished? Like you've left a puzzle incomplete? One missing piece and it's driving you nuts? That was me. My victories seemed hollow, and anxiety's familiar sting prickled at the edges of my mind. So, I did what Hina does best–I faced the music. It might sound like a move from the playbook of the deranged, but hey, that's just how I roll.

Given that I wasn't in dire straits hunting for a job, I didn't cast a wide net. But a ghost still haunted me — that woeful job

interview from yesteryear. With renewed determination, I hunted for openings at the very company that housed the illustrious Ms. Sharpnose and Mr. Knowitall. The plan? Land the job, and then on day one, waltz out. A poetic exit! But lady luck had other plans. There were no openings.

Undeterred, I widened my net. Similar companies. More interviews. Crafting my resume became an art form. Initially, the specter of my past failures weighed me down. Although I had made a name for myself as an entrepreneur, the idea of sitting in a sterile corporate interview room still gave me anxiety. After several rejections, I was shocked when a job offer finally did arrive in my inbox. However, it didn't take long for me to remember that I had moved beyond this kind of career path. I was not just another candidate fresh out of college.

No way was I going to dive into the 9-to-5 grind again. So, I did the logical thing. I accepted the job and never showed up. Closure? Not quite. An insatiable hunger had been awakened in me. Applications flowed out like water, targeting every conceivable job in and around Sacramento. Interviews became my pastime, sandwiched between business meetings. Fast forward to 13 months post- graduation, and I was the interview veteran Sacramento had never asked for. The number of interviews I'd racked up? Staggering. The valuable knowledge of the people and businesses I had acquired were now all combined? Invaluable.

Life, as they say, is a whirlwind. Since launching my small lingerie and writing empire, there have been many plot twists and not only there, but in personal life as well.

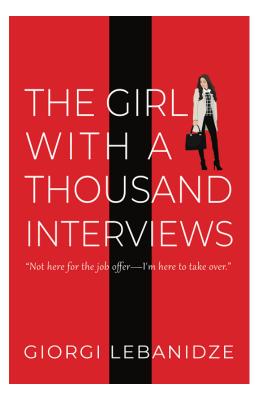
Notably, my venture had evolved, bringing me a steady, albeit not lavish, revenue stream. This financial stability gave me the freedom to explore other industries and expand my knowledge. Abby and a group of my friends were continuously pushing me to pursue pricey certifications. Yet, I remained steadfast, laser-focused on my dual passions — the booming business and my newfound hobby of interviewing.

My company had grown so much that I now had a pleasant mid-sized office downtown on J Street. With seven to nine employees working in the office and two operating from a distance, we ran like a finely tuned engine. There was nothing like the comforting aroma of my morning coffee, now delivered promptly to my desk. And our morning briefs? Well, they had attained something of legendary status. It was an unspoken rule that no one started to work without the daily brief. The fun part? Anyone, from intern to manager, could helm these sessions. It was empowering, motivating, and often a tad chaotic. On the eve of my 24th birthday in August, as another fulfilling day wrapped up, my checklist was nearly all ticked off. But then, just as I was ready to call it a day, Mark, or Tyrese, you may call him, my ever-sopunctual assistant and adviser, breezed in, handing me a document. It detailed an upcoming business meeting—a potential partnership with a company that could bolster our writing division.

Ah, I seemed to have skipped a beat! Amidst all this activity, I'd delved into writing and publishing. But it wasn't the age-old traditional type. It was avant-garde, novel, and refreshingly different. I had already gone through a crazy number of 999 job interviews by that time, and this next one wasn't just any other. This upcoming meeting was expected to be my final job interview - at least for me personally. Wrapping up, Tyrese and I headed out, rendezvousing with Michael, (But he never showed up) who by

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now had moved in with Dan (Probably was spending time with him). We geared up for that monumental meeting. Reflecting on the sheer magnitude of my journey—a fledgling lingerie line turned Stories told by interview collector that had conquered Sacramento and sensing not only, the relentless hum of those near-thousand job interviews, helming two thriving businesses, and finding solace in a hobby, I felt the weight of every choice, every twist, and every turn. There was more going on than it seemed. Hidden stories and even darker secrets were about to come to light, showing me worlds I never knew existed. I was stepping into a new place full of opportunities and risks, emotional stress, and happiness. So, before we launch into the song of my life, let's go back a few years and take in every moment of joy, pain, and drive wild moments up to this culminating point. I invite you to join me on that journey beginning at the very beginning.



From one catastrophic interview to a quest for 1000, Hina spins her failures into a lingerie empire, crafting a tale of humor, surprise, and self-discovery.

The Girl With a Thousand Interviews

By Giorgi Lebanidze

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