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# Few Things Left Unsaid

*was your promise of love fulfilled?*



**SUDEEP NAGARKAR**

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THAT'S THE WAY WE MET

# **Few Things Left Unsaid**

...was your promise of love fulfilled?

Sudeep Nagarkar

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*DEDICATED TO...*

*THE GIRL WITHOUT WHOM MY LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE A TREE WITHOUT LEAVES AND BRANCHES.TODAY I DON'T KNOW WHERE SHE IS.GOD BLESS HER.*

*Tujko pane ke liye ,khudko kho chukka hu,  
Yakin kar tujhe apna banakar tujme khona chahta hu.  
Saal gujar gaye tere aankhon me aankhen dale,  
Bas ek baar nazar se nazar milaana chaahta hu*

*- Sudeep Nagarkar*

*A SPECIAL THANKS TO PANKAJ GHODEKAR- A DEAR FRIEND.  
This work belongs to him equally.*

*Never in my dream...*

*The dream which I never had. The ambitions which I never kept. Still some dreams are coming true. Some ambitions are making their mark. The dream which turned into a wish. A wish which turned into a thought. A thought which was written on a paper. A sheet of paper which turned into a script. A script which is now a product in your hands. I would like to thank all the people who made this come true.*

*Firstly I would like to thank my love- without whom this would not have been possible, helping and supporting me all the way spiritually, the most beautiful girl I have come across in my life.*

*Secondly I would like to thank Pankaj Ghodekar who stood by me in all the phases that I went through while thinking and writing this script. I still remember we used to chat all the way for 12 hours and sometimes more than that.*

*Above all these I really appreciate the presence of my Dad 'Jayant Nagarkar' and My Mom 'Manju Nagarkar', and 'Shweta Nagarkar'-my sister. My uncle Ajay Palimkar, My aunt Anuradha Palimkar and last but not the least my Grandparents. Divakar Palimkar & Sulbha Palimkar.*

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*A warm thanks to all the editors and publishing team at Srishti. It was a sweet experience to work with them. Oh I forgot to thank myself. Without me this would have remained just a dream...*

## **AND I CAN'T STOP LOVING YOU...**

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*Why do I love you, why do I want you...?  
You always lived in my heart...  
Then why did I let you go...*

*Why do I still care for you...?  
Why do I still wait for you...?  
When I know, you will never come back...  
Why do I think of you...?*

*Maybe I should think you weren't mine ever...  
My life is just wasted and it's all true...  
Wondering why I exist...  
Why does my heart beat...?*

*When I had lost my sweetheart that was...  
More important than this bloody heart...*

*Why I am ready to die for you...?  
Why I am ready to fly for you...?  
When I know I can't do that...  
Still I wish I had done something for you...*

*Why do I love you, why do I want you...?  
You have always lived in my heart...  
Then why did I let you go...  
Now being single, I think...  
Why did I let you go...?*

## **MISSED HER...**

“**W**hy are you so stubborn, don't you understand, you are heading towards a dead end.” Sameer told me when I was totally out of my senses. Alcohol was flowing all through my blood. We were sitting on a small bench besides a garage where we usually hung out in the evening. You can call it our smoking lounge.

Sameer was my friend for the last 6 years. An average looking person with an average dressing sense, spectacles, cropped hair, having a weird English tone, which I would always laugh at. I liked him because he was sincere and as the proverb goes ‘A friend in need is a friend indeed’.

Things were turning sour as his voice was raised “If you just want to do what you think which is bloody insane, then get lost, I am leaving”.

“Ok sorry” I replied “I understand it's not right but I just don't want to face the real world. Not anymore.”

He gave me some water and the argument continued.

If I think about it practically I was really taking my life to that end of the road, which was much darker than what it appeared to be.

*No, I don't care, I don't love her. No, I don't want her back. I am happy, I am enjoying my life. Who says my heart is broken? Am I falling for her? Who says?*

*I will sleep with all the girls and why I should think of just one girl when she just does not care. In fact she gives a damn....*

Nevertheless, the fact was that I was just fooling myself by saying all this, as I always loved her, cared for her and will do it forever.

However, I still wonder why did I let her go...

Why does someone love one person so much? I gave a thought to it. Still I could not find an answer. It is an unsolved mystery.

“You never loved me. It was just lust. You loved my appearance. You hurt me, my feelings and my love toward you. You would not have ignored me otherwise.” Riya said this when I called her on 10<sup>th</sup> September, just to convince her to come back in my life and take me out from whatever was going on in my life.

“No bachha, I never ignored you. Still if you think so, I am ready to do whatever you want. You really think I just loved your appearance, I won't contact you. But you know what the truth is..” I said furiously

“What matters is trust. Which you broke so easily. TRUST, HEART AND RELATIONS are three things that one should respect. However, you broke all the three and left me alone. Now just buzz off.” Her tone rose as my pleading became more irritating to her.

“Fine I won't disturb you ever but just tell me one thing, seriously you don't love me any more.” I really wanted her to say yes I do. I miss u. I want you. I am all yours.

“No, I don't. I do not even care for you now. Please leave me alone. Bye.”

*What the fuck. Lust... love... what does she mean. I loved her. Never did I lust for her. Did she mean that whatever she felt for me was lust? However, she is so beautiful that I do not deserve to be her boyfriend. She loved me. She did. I hope she did. Alternatively, she did not. Was it lust? Was it the end of everything? Was it the end of happiness? End of friendship? End of relationship? On the other hand, maybe it was the end of life for me...*

That was the time I decided on some firm decisions that could have taken my life to the last stage.

The Supreme Court says “dafa 302, sazaa-e- maut, to be hanged till death...”

Seems silly, seems like I have gone crazy, but I got the verdict from my broken heart.

“SAZAA-E-MAUT.HANG TILL DEATH.”

Life goes on. Bang. I fell on the floor unconscious saying I love you, I really love you. I never betrayed you. Situations were against me. Trust me my baccha. I am still crazy about u. My heart still skips a beat whenever I see you.

Nobody heard me. Nobody took it seriously except for few close friends. However, I was ruled by my heart that cried and cried...

“Raat itni tanha kyu hoti hai,

*Kismat se apni sabko shikaayat kyu hoti hai.*

*Ajib khel khelti hai kismat...*

*Jise hum paa nahi sakte....*

*Usi se mohabbat kyu hoti hai.”*

## **HER BIRTHDAY ...CLOSE OR FAR**

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11<sup>th</sup> October. The day which had utmost importance in my life. I was waiting for it for so long. Everything was prepared. After all it was Riya's birthday. As I was 5 months younger to her she used to tease me a lot. "You are younger, follow my orders" were the words she always spoke. Missing everything and thinking of bringing her back once again, I was ready with what I wished for that day. Three days prior, I decided on a gift for her. Searched a lot, finally got one very innocent sweet teddy bear for 500 rupees and self made greeting card which said

*Forgive me for all the things I did.  
Sorry for all the pain I gave you.  
No sooner than you went away,  
I realised you were my life. Please give my  
Life back. I need it. I miss it.*

*Yours,  
Aditya.*

It was 11 October morning. I woke up early because of goosebumps that I felt all over. Anxious, afraid, excited, happy and nervous.

All these feelings were running through me and I was speechless. I was continuously listening to our favorite song.

*Tujhe dekh dekh sona, tujhe dekh kar hai jagna, Maine ye zindagani sang tere bitaani, tujhme basi hai meri jaan...*

Listening to this, I drove my bike to Navi Mumbai. Her place. I saw my watch. It was 2:30pm. Smoking a cigarette, nervous, I was standing in front of her apartment.

One cigarette over. I saw my watch again. It was 2:40pm.

10 cigarettes over. I saw the time again. It was 3:30pm.

1 cold drink and 15 cigarettes over. It was 4:10pm.

2 cold drinks and 20 cigarettes over. It was 4:40pm.

I thought of giving up. Sameer who was with me for two hours still motivated me.

“She will dude. Just Wait.”

“Why me always. I can’t talk to my love on her birthday.”

However, it was my mistake. It was all because I took the worst decision of my life. I was the one who left her all alone. Why to blame anyone.

It was 4:50pm. I took my mobile and dialled her number.

“Is it ringing?” Sameer asked.

“Not yet.”

“Is it?” Sameer whispered.

“Ssshhh... Wait, its ringing.”

I could hear her hello tune.

*Jab rulaana hi tha tujhe, to phir hasaya kyu, saath rehkar bhi hai juda, to pass aaya kyu....*

My heartbeats increased. I heard a sound. “hello” I said.

The number you have dialed is currently busy.

What the fuck. I will throw my cell away. Why me, why always me?

“Aditya, she came, she came, and she came”

Run....Sameer shouted.

Yes, she was there. Dressed in white skinny fit top, low waist jeans, earphones hanging, black bag, black eyeliner and hair left loose. Hot and sexy enough to drive me crazy. I was confused how to react. I just ran away. It was a straight road with a curve ahead to go to other apartments.

I stopped there and watched her coming. Sameer drove his bike wearing a helmet to remain unnoticed. She came forward. My heartbeats became faster. She came closer. I missed a heartbeat. I wonder how I was alive.

I was paralysed, what to do. She was getting into an autorickshaw. Damn, all in vain I thought.

When suddenly my legs responded and I ran in her direction with a box of chocolates in one hand and a gift in the other hand all wrapped up,

“Riya, please wait”.

“Auto, take me to HDFC bank.” she said to the driver.

“Please wait. Just two minutes. Please.”

“I am late Aditya, Please.”

“I just want two minutes. I won’t waste any more time.”

“Ok fine, come in the rickshaw till HDFC and then get down.”

I got in and sat.HDFC was hardly 1km away. Still better to get something than nothing.

“How are you?” I inquired.

“I am enjoying my life.” I knew what it meant. She just wanted to show that she did not care for me anymore. She just wanted me to stop bothering her.

“Oh really, so whats the plan for today?” I asked her eager to hear that *nothing, can you join me with my friends*. However, it was impossible.

“No need to tell you. Don’t bother.”

Seriously, this was the worst answer anyone could expect. However, I was helpless. If I would have over- reacted at that time she would have thrown me out at that moment itself. I had waited for this moment for a long time,I didn’t want to ruin it. Therefore, I kept mum.But my heart is an idiot. It shouted at her...

“Why are you so rude?”

“Aditya, it’s my birthday and I am going out with my friends. so please don’t spoil my day.”

Was I spoiling her day? I thought I would make her day special by giving her a surprise. However, you can never understand girls. Divine creations by God.

“Happy birthday” I wished her

“Thanks”.” now get down. We are at HDFC.”

She told the rickshaw driver to wait and went to the atm. I was still waiting there. She came out of atm and was bit annoyed watching me still waiting there.

“You are still standing here. Just leave, don’t make me angry.”

“These gifts are for you.” I was really keeping my fingers crossed. I was not sure whether she would accept them.

“Thanks, but I can’t take them.” I knew this.

“Please take them, please.”

“No, I can’t take them. I will take these chocolates but not this big wrapped thing. Sorry.”

“Riya it’s just for you.”

“So what, throw it away?” My heart cried. It was broken badly. It was shattered. I was helpless. I needed her. I needed her even more badly. My heart needed her much more badly.

She went away. I was thinking should I be happy that I saw her or should I be crying that it was a bad surprise for her or should I think I wasted 500 rupees. she didn’t even take it. It was not a small amount. I would have got four bottles of beer for it.

*Why God. Why me.*

DRINK TILL DEATH-I thought.

But was it really the end of life?

Nothing is permanent. Maybe I thought my love story would take a new turn and give a happy ending.

Or will it be viceversa.I was really trapped. My life was at a standstill.

Who knows how Riya will be back? I gave a thought...

But why did I let her go...

*I always dreamt of falling in love and when I was in love, everything felt like a dream. It was a dream world with no limits. I got a girl who deserved better than I did. Still she was with me. I was her life. What happened then? Why did I do this. The dream ended in a way I never wanted it to. Nevertheless, the dreams hurt, as it was not real. Therefore, does falling in love hurt after all it is a fall. I realised why actually people called it falling in love. I got my answers when I was crushed from inside and left hurt, bleeding all alone from inside....*

## FEEL OF GOD....

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*I always loved you, will always do.However,I will never comeback  
In fact I cannot come back in your life. You move ahead in your life AND PLEASE STOP DRINKING  
AND SMOKING TOO MUCH.*

I received a sms when I was just about to study for my fourth paper of 4<sup>th</sup> semester.. The result was that book was closed again and I started to think who had told Riya that I drink or smoke too much. However, I could not guess who had done it.

Finally the exam day came. I had studied almost three chapters that carried a weightage of 40 marks. I knew I was going to screw this paper badly. But fortune favours the brave.3 chapters accounted for almost 80marks and I was sure about clearing the subject. I was sure of getting a golden figure of 40. Now it was time to have a blast on the big new years night. Leaving all negative vibrations behind.

We friends enjoyed the night as if it was the last day of our life. Food, chicken, beer, cigarettes everything was savoured. I was driving my bike back home at around 3am .I stopped on the highway to smoke. I was just resting on my bike and was not really in my senses. A stranger tapped me from behind. I turned around. He was well built in his mid 40s maybe. White shirt, black trousers Woodland shoes...

He was looking into my eyes deeply. Even he was drunk. I felt it,looking into his eyes. Finally, he broke the silence.

“What is your problem son?”

I was confused and said nothing.

“Are you in love?” he questioned me.

How did he know that I was in love...I never met him. I had never seen him earlier.

“Tell me son, I can see you are not happy.” he continued

Was I so drunk and had lost my mind...what exactly was happening?

I was a bit shocked. If he is dad’s friend then I was going to get flushed out of my house.

“I am deeply in love.” I answered him

“Then what’s the problem? She does not love you or what? Or you never told her? Why are you becoming a devdas?”

Now this was too much. I really could not find an answer to all these questions. Who was this man? Was I looking like devdas? What the fuck.

“Nothing uncle. She loves me too. However, she cannot come back to me and I am not able to bear this pain anymore.I am just living for my parents.”

“You have to. They are the one who care for you. They are the ones who live for you. They are the one who work hard for your future. They are the one who will have many expectations from you. They are the one who gave you your life.”

Tears rolled down my eyes. I knew whatever he said was true. I realised whatever I heard just now could not be ignored.

“I am 48 years old, A Bengali, we are born romantic.”

Does he mean a born devdas? Not again I thought. Two devdas standing in middle of the road at 3am discussing about Paro.Thank god... late night Chandramukhis were not there.

“I loved a girl, maybe 100 times more than you do. But today I cannot go back to her even if she calls me. I have my family. I cannot leave them. My son. My wife. I just can’t leave them alone.”

“True” I said.

“Look my son, love is never wrong, but a girl can be wrong. Remember these words.”

What did he say just now? Did I ever hear It.?

***Love is never wrong but a girl can be.***

These words went straight into my heart

“Just carry on with your life.Don’t give up. You still have a long life ahead of you.”

I got serious. Was he a human or an angel from heaven to show me the right way? Who was he?

I did not know him, never saw him. Why was he showing me life, when I never believed in god? Except for my love Riya, who trusted Lord Ganesha a lot. But, I never did. Then why me?

“If I were in your shoes, I would have dated some model. You look really charming. So smart. Why are you ruining your life? Move ahead my son, move ahead. This is my card. I will be happy, if you call me tomorrow.”

He left. I was still standing there. Looking at him going away from me. Bringing my life closer to me. A lot closer than I would have expected. I laid on my bike. Closed my eyes just to get over what had really happened a few minutes back.

Was the girl wrong or am I wrong? Riya can't be wrong. She is too sweet to be wrong. She did everything for me. I never did anything for her. I wished I had done something for her. I just gave her pain. How can such a sweetheart be wrong? I never believed in it. Never will. I was wrong. It was me.

I took his card out from my pocket...

“MR BANARJEE-A Sales Manager.”

I reached home to relive those moments. That night and the next day, I could not sleep. I just wanted to relive whatever I had gone through. From the very beginning.

I sat on my sofa, closed my eyes, and went back to the days after my hsc exam. Struggling to get admission somewhere.

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## **DEGREE COLLEGES – RAT RACE**

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I had heard degree colleges are like girls skirt. We just want to see what is inside it. Is the atmosphere nice? Is the service good? It is like getting obsessed with it.

Moreover, once you are obsessed it is difficult to get it out of your mind. However, after seeing, the same girl's skirt or maybe inside the skirt for 4 years you get bored. You just want to get out of it. I have also heard that in engineering 80% of the final exam will be based on the one lecture you missed and the one book you did not read.

I also read somewhere few funny things about engineering...

A group of managers were given the assignment to measure the height of a flagpole. They attacked the challenge with ladders and tape measures. Soon they were falling off the ladders, dropping the tape measures - the whole thing was just a mess.

An engineer came along and saw what they were trying to do, walked over, pulled the flagpole out of the ground, laid it flat, measured it from end to end, gave the measurement to one of the managers and walked away.

After the engineer had gone, one manager turns to another and laughed. "Isn't that just like an engineer, we're looking for the height and he gives us the length."

Still my parents wanted me to do engineering. I was just waiting for the list to be displayed, I was praying, I was just nervous. I had studied hard for the whole year of hsc and had achieved good scores to get through the admission process of engineering. The day arrived. I just browsed the site to see what my future was. However, the server was very slow. I was unable to browse the site. I waited for few minutes and the site asked my application number.

*ENTER YOUR APPLICATION NUMBER*

I was scared whether would I be placed in a good college in Mumbai or somewhere outside. I did not really want to leave my parents and stay away from home. I clicked to get result option. It was the scariest moment I had ever witnessed. I was looking at the screen of my computer. My mom was looking at me. That look made me more nervous. My dad was out of town. I really wanted him close to me.

Result was displayed.

*Not placed in any college*

How could it happen? I looked at my mom. I saw tears in her eyes. She went to her bedroom. I never thought this would be the result. I had scored good marks. Maybe I did not enter ranking of colleges properly. Maybe I had done something wrong while I filled the form. I really had a good score to get through some college if not in Mumbai then atleast outside Mumbai. I was scared to face my mom. Still with courage, I went to her and consoled her. The second list was still to be displayed. Maybe better luck next time.

I called Sameer to inquire about what his result was.

“Hey, Sameer what’s your result, did u get placed?”

“I was about to call you. I got placed in Euro College in Navi Mumbai. What about you?”

I just ended the call. I was disturbed. This was not fair. He had scored less than me. Still he had got through. And I had not. This made me jealous. He was an OBC,so he had got through.Sameer took all friends to party as he was placed in a good college. We had fun the whole night.Sameer asked me to booze. However, I did not. I really hated boozing. I thought it was a waste of money and time. Moreover, I was disturbed about what had happened. My entire family was disturbed.

“Don’t worry yaar, you will get a good college. Just relax and enjoy the moment.”

It’s very easy to say these things but difficult to put it into practice. I still tried to enjoy myself with everyone. But somewhere in my mind, I was aware that I had not satisfied my parents. I did not want to take admission through management quota where about two or three lakh rupees donation is asked. Next morning mom gave me a letter that had arrived by courier. I opened it and I saw my BMS results, BUSINESS OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES. I was excited. I was offered three colleges out of which two were among the top five. I was excited to tell my mom about this. As she saw the list, she gave me a very cold reaction. As if, she was not interested in it.

I had given BMS entrance exam also. I wanted to do BMS and not engineering. However, my parents never supported me in this decision. I somehow tried to convince my parents telling them the benefits of BMS and showing them why BMS is better than engineering. However, they were firm on their decision. MY SON WILL BE AN ENGINEER. My dad too was an engineer. Maybe that was the reason they wanted me to do engineering. I never understood what engineering was. I tried a lot but all in vain. NO BMS.AND IT’S FINAL.

The second admission list of engineering colleges was going to be displayed today. Once again, I was in front of my computer. I really wanted to get through this time. As I was left with no option now of BMS.I clicked on get result option.

## *EURO COLLEGE*

*I saw the look in my mom’s eyes. It said finally my son would be an engineer. It was really something I never wanted. But I was happy to see my mom happy. AN ENGINEER...*

*For an optimist the glass is half full, for a pessimist it’s half empty.And for an Engineer it is twice bigger than necessary.*

I made up my mind that I would be an engineer. After all, girls were attracted towards engineers. The reason being,it looks good on a resume. But surely some girls might be thinking an engineer works from 6:30am to 7:30pm daily. That means no morning kisses and no evening walks and no cuddling at night too...I wished there were some good looking girls with nice curves in my class. Being in the electronics department increased my chances of having them. Obviously, there were more girls in electronics branch than in other fields like mechanical and civil. Computers and I.T. had almost same intake of girls as in electronics. However, I.T. and computers have nice curves and a fairer skin than electonics.Sameer opted civil engineering. He wanted the same. I never wanted engineering itself.

I was satisfied for three reasons. First, I saw my parents happy. Second, I had got into same college, where Sameer was. Third, I got a branch where girls could be expected. 4 years without girls will make life more difficult. No curves, no skirts, no cleavages, no flirting was impossible for me.

College was about to start from 3<sup>rd</sup> august. I wanted to make a good impact on girls from the first day. I purchased new shirts and t-shirts, new denims, new woodland shoes. Everything was for the girls. I wanted the first impression to be the best.

3<sup>RD</sup> AUGUST. MY COLLEGE TIMING WAS 10:30AM.

I left my house around 9:30am. It was raining heavily. It was first day of college. It was my parents' dream that I should study in an engineering college. That was the day their dream came true. The lecture was at 11 am. I was there by 10:15 am. I entered the class. There was only one friend of mine, who was from same school. The rest were all new to me. Therefore, I sat with my school friend.

The college campus was not that good. The building was tricky. There were too many gates. I was confused from where to enter and from where to exit. The seniors informed us that we had to assemble in the quadrangle. List of names were displayed. Divisions were allotted to everyone. There was a huge crowd gathered near the quadrangle. I preferred to stay away from the crowd. I was just glancing at girls closely. Girls of different shapes. Girls with tight jeans. Girls with cute smiles. They all seemed excited as they were future engineers. Everyone was busy in his or her own world. Then a group of seniors arrived.

They told a few of us to join them on second floor. Classrooms were numbered S1 S2 S3 and so on on the second floor. Similarly F1 F2 and so on the first floor. We entered S3. We were almost 15 students, which included 1 girl. I understood what was happening. RAGGING.

One of the seniors came towards me. He was well built almost 6 feet and long hair upto his shoulders. I was asked to stand separately in the left corner of the classroom. One girl was also asked to do the same. She was wearing a red tank top and low waist jeans. Perfect curves. Moreover, a nice butt. I liked her. I was confused what was happening. Why were we made to stand separately? The remaining students were asked to strip. A sense of relief went through me that I was not the one to strip.

If I had to strip, it would have been embarrassing because I was wearing green underwear. It would have been centre of attraction. Nevertheless, I was safe. I was still worried as to what I had to do. Definitely not, strip. I wished it was not worse than that. These students were forced to stand outside the classroom, which faced the quadrangle. All the freshers standing in the quadrangle were able to watch this scene. It was the scariest moment for me at least. I glanced at the girl standing beside me. I asked her where she lived. I came to know she was from Mulund in central Mumbai. Mulund is almost 8km away from the college and 5 km from my house. Her name was Nikita. She was as afraid as I was. I could see that in her eyes. It was tough to face that situation.

I was waiting for my turn. All students had left the classroom. Nikita and me were left along with the seniors. Finally, I was told to propose the girl standing besides me. Nikita was afraid as she was told to kiss me after I proposed. This made me excited though. The first day in college and you, get a kiss from one of the hottest bombshells. Seems interesting. Further she was told to slap me hard after I kissed her... I was tense. Getting a slap from such a bombshell could make things worse.

No chance of getting close to her maybe. However, I had to face it. I was planning to give her the best kiss of her life. Maybe a slight touch or deep passionate kiss.

I went closer to her and proposed to her. *I LOVE YOU.*

Seniors were not satisfied. They wanted something different.

Therefore, I tried something different. I said *I want to spend my entire life with you. Will u allow me to do so?*

This was also rejected by seniors. I just gave a thought. I remembered one message and tried to propose to her saying...

“I want to ask you 1 question. Can I?” I asked Nikita.

She replied, “Yes you can.”

“Ok listen then, once there were 2 birds in a house, ‘I LOVE YOU’ and ‘YOU LOVE ME’ were their names. Then ‘YOU LOVE ME’ flew away. So tell me who is left in the house?”

I thought I have made a big mistake saying this. I just looked at seniors. Everyone were looking at me. Staring at me. And suddenly everyone started laughing. I calmed down. I was waiting for Nikita to answer.

“I LOVE YOU”

Seniors shouted...common kiss him. Don't waste time

She came close to me. Every girl grows up thinking of her first kiss being magical...

Was this her first kiss? I did not dare to ask her this. She came closer to me. I could see the fear in her eyes. Maybe first kiss.

I whispered in her ears in the calmest voice, "Don't worry about it, it's not a big deal, let's just do it and get over with it, I'll be nice, I promise". She felt a bit comfortable after I said this. We both were thinking who would kiss first. Finally being a guy, I took the initiative and lip locked her. She closed her eyes. I was watching her closed eyes. I grabbed her shoulders and her lips touched mine. Then I grabbed her face and jammed my tongue down her throat. And the teeth... oh God, the teeth. It was as if I had run full force, mouth-open into a Dodge. Her tongue rolling inside my mouth. This finally answered my question. Not the first kiss for sure. Moreover, this was not my first kiss also. Even I went on rolling with her tongue. It was a deep passionate kiss. I thought it was my dream.

“Stop it. Enough” I heard someone shouting. I wanted this kiss to continue. However, I had to stop. She opened her eyes. She was blushing. I think she loved it. There was a spark in her eyes. Was she in love with me or with the kiss? She was just looking in my eyes. There was a deep silence in the classroom. And she slapped me suddenly. She did slap me hard. I was shocked. But I had to face it. I almost fell down. It was a tight slap. We were asked to leave. And we both left. I tried to follow Nikita approaching her. But she went away. She did not care to stop.

*Was I a bad kisser? She did not even look back. Was I in love? Maybe I wanted her on the bed. Not love. She was an excellent kisser.*

I went down to the quadrangle and noted down the subjects and timetable. College timing was from 11am to 6pm. Difficult task. In addition, all the five subjects seemed like names of some drugs. I hated all of them.

1. APPLIED MATHEMATICS. 1.
2. APPLIED SCIENCE 1.
3. BEE
4. CP1
5. APPLIED MECHANICS.

My section was E. ROLL NO 36.

*As it was first day, college started at around 2pm. After lunch break.*

I sat on the last bench. Classrooms were arranged like a theatre. Each row was at some height from the previous one. I was sitting on the last row from where each student in the classroom could be seen clearly. I was watching all the girls. There were a few nice looking girls in my class. I was happy to see that. Sameer was in a different section. Section B. I started talking to a guy sitting besides me. His name was Swapnil. He was average looking. Almost of same height as I was. 5 feet 6 inches. He seemed very friendly. He also stayed near my place. Central Mumbai.

The first lecture was quite boring. I never heard what the professor was teaching. He was teaching something related to transistors like bjt... He had drawn some block diagrams that were looking funny. He was telling us the advantages and how bjt works. I hated everything. I wondered how I was going to spend 4 years in this college. After the lectures were over at 4pm there were practicals, from 4pm to 6pm. BEE practicals. When I saw the lab, all my admiration for the college was gone, I was in shock after seeing this. Forget about chairs, the lab didn't even have fans. Seriously speaking it was very tough to convince myself that I was going to spend my days in that place. Never imagined a college like this. One positive thing was there, I talked to some seniors and they were all very optimistic, they were all saying that it was a good place for engineering; I would enjoy my day here. They believed that this college had a great alumni base and that was the biggest advantage.

Now we were three friends. Not bad I thought as they were good friends. I had a good time with them on the first day. Sameer was also there. We formed a group of 4. Sameer, Swapnil, Anup, and I.

Attending lectures regularly from 10:30am to 6pm was like watching the same movie in a multiplex everyday. Bunking classes became a regular habit. I never understood what made those first benchers sit for lectures. There was nothing interesting in the lectures. It was Monday morning, the 1st lecture

of the day. Swapnil was dozing during the lecture. Even I was doing the same. Swapnil was planning to bunk. I never thought that was possible. These first benchers would never cooperate with this. They watched the professor during the lecture with so much enthusiasm as if Shakira was moving her hips in front of them.

What was running through Swapnil's mind? He was very smart in these things. After the first lecture, we had practicals. As we reached practical, he told me to send a sms to one student of each batch.

MASS BUNK AFTER BREAK. TELL YOUR ENTIRE BATCH.

We informed each student of our batch. A few students were afraid of mass bunking. They feared their attendance would go down and they would get less marks in term work. These were the most irritating students of the class. Every engineering college has a few students like this. I never understood what they get by moving around the professors all the time. For a few marks they could do, anything. Swapnil warned them not to sit for lectures. Still I thought they would sit for the lecture. It had happened earlier also. We were told it is mass bunk and six students sat for the lecture. This time we were serious. We convinced everyone from our batch.

The practicals were over. Our entire class was standing outside our classroom. Who ever was coming we told them not to attend lectures. Looking at the majority standing outside, those 5 to 6 students were not able to enter the class. They went home. We were still standing in front of the door. We did not want a single student to sit. There were 10 min left for the lecture to start. We told everyone to leave the corridor. Almost 10 of us went to the second floor to check if the professor was going back to the staff room.

Professor came and saw that the classroom was locked. He opened it. The classroom was empty. He was still standing there to see if any one was around. Almost 10 min later, he saw some student.

Some discussion was going on. After talking to him for few minutes, he left. We went down running and asked that student what the professor was saying.

“He said to tell everyone that tomorrow we have to submit punishment assignment.”

“Punishment assignment?” Swapnil asked.

“Yes, we have to solve 5 problems from the Kumbhojkar textbook.”

“Forget it; he didn't take your attendance, right?” I asked him.

“No he didn't.”

We left. It was our first *mass bunk of engineering*. It was fun. Mass bunking is always a challenge. It is not so easy to hold the students from sitting for a lecture. These students had the same blood group as of the professors I think. Their bonding cannot be broken. However, we did it today. A proud feeling came in us as if we had our engineering degree in hand.

We were telling everyone from the other section that we had managed our first mass bunk.

Because of mass bunking, we were given four assignments by the professors of each subjects. Swapnil and I decided to bunk the classes and write the assignments. Anup also joined us. Rohit had done that assignments already. We took his assignments and left the class. I decided to call Sameer also. I called him and he also joined us. He did not have any assignments though. But bunking classes was fun. We decided to sit at Aerol station. It was the best place where you could play cricket, or have a nice time with your girlfriend or even write assignments. The frequency of trains was one after almost 2 or 3 hours. So it was a vacant platform always. Navi Mumbai platforms are very clean. We reached the station, which was hardly 5 minutes away from our college. There were hardly a few people on the platform and few students. Couples were having a nice time. We had four assignments to be written. Writing work started. Sameer got bored, as he did not have anything to write. He broke the silence.

“So you guys were interested in engineering or forced by parents?” Sameer asked Swapnil and Anup.

“I was always interested in engineering. I wanted to be an I.T. engineer. It offers you a white collar job. I love that life. What about you?” Swapnil replied.

“Same here. Even I wanted to be a civil engineer. It gives you an opportunity to earn more than any engineer can. A civil person gets the desired salary as white income but along with that lots of black money can also be earned.”

“Is money everything?” Anup asked.

“No. but we need money for everything, dont we? If we need to drink water then we need money. What better field than engineering. Moreover a civil engineer. It’s like *sone pe suhaaga*.” Sameer laughed and so did we.

“What about you Anup?” I asked.

“Kya yaar....why are you thinking so much. Now we have taken admission. Now we cannot change things. Whether we like it or not we have to get our asses fucked for four years. Ab lag Gaye la\*\*e. so stop this discussion and write assignments. Or else Deshmukh sir will cut our dicks into pieces.” Anup ignored the topic.

It made me feel good. Somebody at least is with me. Who is forced to do this bullshit. I really felt at that time that engineering is like a marriage. Bachelors are eager to do it. In addition, married persons have declared themselves dead a few years back itself.

After writing assignments and having lunch on the platform itself we started walking towards college. Anup saw a ‘Tapri’ near college and asked us to join him. I was unaware that Anup smoked.

“Anup, smoking kills...” Swapnil said.

“Ya, but slowly.” He replied.

I loved his answer. The feeling of trying a smoke was increasing in me. I had never tried smoking. Sameer had. Even he was smoking. Anup and Sameer were forcing me to try.

“Have it yaar. It’s nothing serious. You will feel like coughing in the beginning but then when you get used to it, it’s normal. Moreover, cigarettes keep your mind active. You think better than you can. So have it.”Anup was forcing me.

Finally, I stopped resisting and asked him to buy a cigarette for me.

“*Bhaiya ek gold flake do*” he said to chacha at tapri. He handed it to Anup.He gave it to me. I took a cigarette in my hand for the first time. It was something different. Something I never felt before. There I was, smoking a cigarette with my best friend.... And five minutes later, I was expertly blowing out rings.

*A cigarette is the only consumer product which when used as directed kills its consumer.*

*And I was ready to be killed.* Slow poison so why to worry. Enjoy the feel. And I did the same. I started smoking another cigarette.

The rain had increased. When we heard that the college would be closed due to heavy rains, we started making plans what to do. Sameer said lets go to the waterfall nearby. And we accepted. Going by train would be risky. Therefore, we started walking. All four of us were enjoying the rains.

Sameer bought three bottles of beer and we went close to waterfall. It was an awesome view. I did not drink. I had never tried it. Not even on that day. I had taken three cigarettes with me. I was enjoying the moment. Cigarette in one hand while feeling the rains. Feeling the waterfall. Everyone was drunk. It became difficult for me to control them. However, I really enjoyed their silly jokes. All new friends coming first time to a new place and having an awesome time was really a nice feeling.

Sameer- He had a few bad habits but its ok. He was sincere. Friends like him are rare to find. He can help me whenever needed. He has helped me many times.I loved him.

Swapnil - It was a beginning of our friendship. He was frank. He had an x factor which made him showstopper every time he did something. He can bring girls close to me, a true friend.

Anup- I really could not understand him.we became friends but he never came too close to us. He was transparent with us, but still something was missing. He never came with us outside the college.

## **RIYA- A LOTUS IN MUD**

We had made our own world. World of fun. World of enjoyment. I never thought an engineering college would be so much fun. Moreover such wonderful friends. Still I thought something was missing. *The girls. We started observing girls in our class.* We used to sit on

the last bench. Therefore, we could observe the entire class very clearly. It was the first lecture of the day. Swapnil whispered in my ears.

“Look at the girl on second row in a blue tshirt. She is looking hot.”

“No yaar, she just has a pretty face, look below her neckline. We can play Carom coins easily.”

“Hmm maybe you are right.” Swapnil admitted.

“What about the girl in black in the third row. How is she?” Swapnil continued.

“Not my type. Let it be. You carry on.”

We stopped the discussion and began paying attention to the lecture.

Suddenly five minutes later a girl shouted from the back door.

“May I come in sir?”

I looked at her. My heart skipped a beat. Was it a dream? I do not say she was more beautiful than Angelina Jolie. But something hit my heart. However, some feeling went through me, which said, “Is she the one I am looking for?”

She sat in the third row. She looked behind her. Our eyes met and it was as if our souls joined. We couldn't stop looking at each other. I knew deep down inside that she was the one for me. After a while, I got the giggles and she gave me the most incredible smile. It astounded me. I felt something I have never felt in my life before-- what I believe to be true love. However, I have heard love is when they call you on the phone; you get that tingly feeling inside, every time you get a message from them, you smile and your heart beats a thousand times a minute! Love is, when you hold his or her hand, and knowing that there is nothing better in the world, than being with him or her.

Nothing like this happened. I think I loved her looks. Her dress. Her eyes. Her lips. This was lust. I just wanted her. Love can't happen so easily. However, it was a bit more than lust. I felt so.

A week passed and I still remembered the way our eyes met and the incredible smile she gave me. My attitude in class had changed. I wanted more of her attention. My dressing style changed. I became more conscious. I just wanted to talk to her. But was afraid. It was not that tough to talk to her but after what happened on first day, it was not normal also. I knew she kept an eye on me. I knew that in her heart of hearts she also liked me. But I was afraid. This was happening for the first time. I had many girlfriends earlier. But this was different. This was like the rains in summer. This was like the shining sun in the clouds.

It was computer practicals. CP 1. We entered the lab. I sat on the computer in the corner. Swapnil was sitting besides me. She entered the lab. Looking awesome. Red top and low waist dark blue jeans. Her top was somewhat transparent and her sexy shape attracted me. This made me nervous. She sat beside Swapnil. We were asked to write the experiment from the manual. Swapnil was looking at my nervous face. I was looking at her on the sly. And I knew she was doing the same. There was something between us. I watched her lips closely. They were soft. I just loved them. *Was I falling for her?*

Swapnil exchanged a few words with her. Then they chatted and I was getting jealous. Swapnil was fast in these things. I still did not know the name of the girl and he was talking to her as if he had known her for the last few years. She was responding to him. Even I wanted to join the conversation. But something stopped me. *I never got to know what that something was? Was it love?*

Madam started calling names for attendance. I got a chance to know her name. Swapnil would have told me later. I was watching her carefully and the teacher.

ROLL NO 33.DIV E.

I missed out her name though. I cursed myself. She responded quickly to her name. Her voice made me go crazy. And in the process I missed her name. We left the lab and I asked Swapnil what her name was. He said...

Riya...

*Riya and Aditya...made for each other?*

Swapnil started talking to her regularly or through sms. Still, I never talked to her. Even Anup started talking to her.

The mechanics assignment was given to us. When we were leaving for home after college, I asked Swapnil to give me a Xerox of the assignment. He did not have, neither did Anup. Swapnil asked Riya who was with us always. She had it. Finally, she broke the long silence between us.

“I have not written one question. The rest is complete.” she said to me.

I was blank. I was not able to reply also. I was just watching her lips move. She was staring at me. I lost the control over my heart when I saw that beautiful smile, that spread across her face. The depth in her eyes.

“Hello, is it ok? I have not written the last question.” she said again.

“Absolutely, its ok.no problem. Give me your number, if I have any doubts I will call you.”

Fuck.This is silly. I said to myself. What doubts will I have? However, my heart said it. And I was staring at her.

“Ok fine. Take it.9320....”

Thanks, bye.”

I left. I had really started loving her. I was continuously thinking of her. The feeling of love. The feeling of romance. The feeling of being together. It was what overwhelmed my mind. I loved her. I really did. I was sure it was love. I tried to ask myself why I loved her. Was it the sway in her hips? Or the port in her lips, maybe the love in her eyes. Or it could be the softness of her skin, the silk in her hair. It could also be the sway in her walk; the sweetness in her talk that made me love her. The day I met her I fell into her trap, I had lost.

I finished writing the assignment. I was staring at her name on the assignment. I was madly in love. I searched a sweet sms in my cell to forward her. I got one sms

*Two difficult things to say in life:*

1. *HELLO to a person who is unknown*
2. *GOOD BYE to a person whom you love the most. Good night.*

After 15 minutes I got a sms.I opened my inbox. It was her sms  
Sms just said *good night. Sweet dreams.*

I was excited. But I didn't reply. I did not want to show her that I was desperate for her. Even she did not reply. I wanted her to text me. But she didn't. I checked my mobile after every 10 or 15minutes.But it did not show anything. Every coming sms or call seemed to be her call or sms.which never happened that night. Is this love? I thought so. I kept the cell under my pillow to feel the vibration if her sms came. Still she did not reply. I felt like I should have replied earlier.

Now it was too late to reply. I cursed myself and went to sleep.

Suddenly lectures seemed interesting. I preferred sitting for lectures. Not because I started loving engineering, but because I loved her. The way she used to look at me during lectures. The way she used to give me naughty smiles indicating she liked me. Canteen became a regular hang out. She used to sit beside me in canteen. We started chatting regularly through sms.We started calling each other daily. We started sharing our food daily. It was a changed world all together. I loved each moment of it. Suddenly I started liking college. We bonded with each other quickly as she also hated engineering. This brought us closer.

Assignments increased. I was at the station writing assignment along with Swapnil .Riya called me. I told her to join us. She reached the station within 15 minutes. She lived in Aerol itself. So the station was near her apartment.Swapnil had an inkling that I liked her. I wanted to discuss all these things with Sameer.But he was always busy in his lectures. He hardly bunked any lectures. As we were about to finish our assignments Swapnil noticed the naughtiness in our body language and in our talks. He knew we had become more than friends. However, we never told each other.

“Do you have a boyfriend?”Swapnil asked Riya and I was shocked. I looked at him with anger.Riya looked at me and answered

“No. I am single.” she gave me a big smile after saying this. I did not react.

We started walking towards the college.Swapnil got a call from his dad. His dad wanted him to come to his office. Some personal work which Swapnil didn't tell us. He left midway. It made me a bit nervous. As I never talked to her when we were alone. Infact, we did not get any time for ourselves. We were always accompanied by Anup or Swapnil. Sameer hardly came with us. This was the first time we were spending time alone. We decided to bunk the lectures. We decided to go to a restaurant near our college. I wanted to tell her few things.

We ordered some snacks. Sweet kachori was her favourite.She ordered the same. Paav bhaji was my favourite...

“Riya have you ever fallen in love?” I asked her summoning up all my courage.

“No”

“You also never liked any one”

“I liked many. But I never loved anyone. Maybe I never found anyone who could be perfect for me. What about you?”

“Yes, I had been in relationship for a year or so. Actually, it was during my junior college days. I do not know what it was. Was it love or something else? But when we had a break up it did hurt me for a few days.”

“So are you over it now? Or still...”she asked me

“I am out of it. My friends were supportive. They helped me a lot.”

“*Ok, now you don't worry, I am with you.*” She said

What did she mean by that? Did she love me? Did she really say it or I imagined she had? I got confused. I wanted to ask her what she meant. However, what would she think? Would she be ok with it? These thoughts were running through my mind. Finally, I asked her.

“What's that? What did you mean? You are with me means what?” I asked

“Nothing, just as a friend I am with you always. What did you think?”

“I thought you mean more than a friend. Are you sure you meant that?”

“Yes. Am sure. Now let's leave.”

I knew what she meant. I just gave a chance to myself. I tried to break the boundaries.

“I don't think so. If you want to support me then you will have to take care of me like a small kid. What say?” I wanted an answer.

“Are you crazy? Am not your wife.”

“So what. You can take care of me. Can't you. And wow, that is a good word. From now onwards I will call you my wife.”

“Oh no. please don't. I will take care of you but don't call me wife. Please.”

She did not reject it totally. I was sure she liked me. I continued flirting with her.

“I will call you my wife. In addition, you have to take care of me. Like a small kid. Like your sweet *bachha*. Is it fine?”

“Do whatever you want.” she blushed.

We left for our respective homes and had the best time till date. She even messaged me that it was the best time she ever had. That satisfied me. That made me love her more.

Before sleeping I sent her a long sms...

Hey dear, oooopss sorry, my dear wife, This was the best day I have ever had in my life. Talking to you makes me complete. Being with you makes me comfortable. Looking into your eyes makes me energetic. I do not know how you are feeling. However, I am still missing my sweet kachori. My dearest friend. Thanks a lot for spending such a quality time with a person like me who doesn't even deserve your friendship. Thanks a lot. Miss you, my wife. Take care. Good night. See you tomorrow.

There was an immediate reply.

“Good night my bachha. My husband. ha ha...tc. good night. And don't take these things seriously.”

I loved the first part of the sms. It really gave me the feeling that someone really cared for me. Someone loved me a lot. Showed me much affection and love. I was overjoyed. But why the hell did she have to write the next part. Girls will be girls. They will never show what is going on in their mind. However, they do not know we boys are much smarter than they are. I knew she loved me. But didn't have guts to tell me.

We were getting closer to each other. She never revealed though that she loved me. I used to give her hints by saying some things that said I love her. No reactions from her side though. I started calling her MY WIFE daily. She loved it. We started bunking lectures as submissions were getting closer, many write-ups were pending. Swapnil Anup, and Riya helped me a lot in writing experiments as we were lagging behind in each write-up.

Once we were sitting in the hall. I was talking on mobile and Riya was writing my experiment. The sheet she was writing on fell. And she bent to pick it up. She was wearing a red top and light blue jeans that revealed her shape to maximum. As she bent down her top moved upwards revealing her back. It was just too sexy. My eyes rolled over it. I wanted to touch it. I purposely stood back and watched it. Her back was still slightly visible. I wanted to feel it. I wanted to move my finger over it. I wanted her on bed right there. However, she would not have agreed and nor was there a bed. I went close to her from behind. I could feel the fragrance of her body. I could feel the warmth of her body. I wanted to kiss her neck. I went too close. I wanted her. But I wanted it to be special. She was my love. I wanted to spend my entire life with her. I wanted her to be my wife. I wanted her to take care of me.

She looked at me. She was surprised to see me so close to her. I whispered in her ears almost kissing them.

“Your top has moved up”. Before she could adjust it, I touched her top and adjusted it. This was the first time I touched her. My heart was beating at abnormal speed. She blushed but did not say any-

thing, as we were not alone. Her blush made me crazy. She was the perfect one. I started loving her too much. She was too good for me.

Practical began at 2pm. Applied mechanics. It was held in a small classroom. I sat with Riya.

Thakur sir explained to us something about trusses. I was not interested in trusses. I was interested in shapes and curves. I was sitting beside my love. My wife. I asked her.

“When did we married? Do you remember?”

“Shut up Aadi. We are in a practical.”

I loved when she called me Aadi. It gave me a feeling that she loved me more than I did. I really wished she did.

“So what. As if, you are learning something productive or as if, you have interest in learning those mechanics. Bull shit they are.”

“Aadi, it’s a tough subject. We won’t be able to clear if we don’t study”

“Leave it yaar; I have joined classes on Saturdays. Why to worry. I will teach you.”

“Ok fine. What do you want to ask.” she replied

“Do you remember when we got married?”

“Funny, we are not married. We are just friends.”

“What yaar, you always ignore. Let it be. Concentrate on mechanics.”

She gave me a sweet smile after this discussion, which said it all. Maybe she was afraid of accepting that she loved me. I wanted to find the reason. However, I could not.

I always wanted to tell her how much I admired her. I always want to tell her whenever she would be upset I would hold her tight. I always wanted to hang out with her. Play with her hair. Pick her up, tickle her and

wrestle with her. Hold her hand and run. Just hold her hand and kiss her. Give her piggyback rides, Push her on swings. Tell her she looked beautiful. When she was sad, I wanted to stay on the phone with her, even if she was not saying anything. I wanted to look into her eyes and smile. Kiss her on her forehead. I wanted to kiss her in the rain. I wanted to tell her all these things.

We started appreciating each other in every possible way we could. She used to appreciate my dressing if I looked nice. I used to do the same. I always used to tell her that she looked beautiful in red and black. She use to wear those colours often. She liked blue and black on me. Even green sometimes. These were sweet moments that we shared along. Sameer, Swapnil, Anup had taken a back. Its not that I avoided them. However, Riya and I were always in our dream world. Talking about marriage, teasing each other. It was fun. She never took it seriously. I always did. But never told her.

All my friends started teasing us. They used to call us *made for each other couple*. It was never serious from their side either. I was living the best days of my life. The days, which would be remembered for a long time. *I STARTED LIKING ENGINEERING IN THE PROCESS.*

We decided to bunk college and just hang out in the canteen. Actually we were not in a mood to sit for lectures. Sameer also joined us. We ordered cold drinks and snacks. Riya was looking very beautiful that day in orange and yellow salwaar kameez. It looked beautiful on her. She looked like a perfect wife.

“Let’s play a game.” Sameer said.

“Which game? Are you crazy to play games in the canteen?” I replied.

“Truth or dare. What say?” he asked all of us. We all looked at each other and agreed to play. Sameer started telling us the rules of the game. It was something different. Who ever gets truth would confess something about his life in his style. Moreover, who ever gets dare would have to write all assignments and experiments of his wish. Not only his assignments but for all of us. It seemed interesting to me. I had already decided what I was going to do if it was truth to me. I wished it was not dare. It would have been a tough week, writing all assignments.

“Sameer, spin the bottle” Riya said.

Sameer did it. Round and round. I wished it was me. I wanted to do something different. I was listening to fm also at the same time. And I had decided whichever song it would play I would dedicate it to Riya.

The bottle stopped at Sameer. We all decided to give him dare so that he would write all the assignments for us. Majority of electronics made civil suffer. He agreed. Infact he had to agree. It was his rule.

The next time bottle stopped at Riya. I gave her truth. Now it was her turn to confess. I was waiting for her to say something that could take our relation to next level.

“I don’t have anything to confess. Still let me tell you something. I am originally from Borivli. Western Mumbai. I did my schooling there. I shifted here due to my dad’s business in Navi Mumbai. It was difficult for me to settle here in Aerol. It was a different life there. I had to change my way of dressing here. I also have a younger brother named Ameya. I call him *bachha*, he is my life. My parents tell me that I have to look after his education later on. Moreover, I am very possessive about Shah Rukh Khan. I love him a lot. If any one says anything about him it makes me crazy.”

She looked at us. We applauded her. I really started respecting her more. Not because she loved Shah Rukh Khan but because she loved her brother so much. She was perfect. She was my wife. I said to myself.

This time the bottle stopped at me. Swapnil gave me truth. I had decided what I would do. I just put my earphones on. I had 2300 nokia mobile. I switched on the radio. Searched for all channels for a nice song. And I got the song, which could be dedicated to her.

“I am dedicating a song to Riya. Specially for Riya...”

Everyone started with ooo’s and aaa’s and Riya blushed. I started singing the song...

*Lagta hai yeh kyu mujhe.....sadiyo se chahu tujhe....*

*Lagta hai yeh kyu mujhe.....sadiyo se chahu tujhe....*

*mere sapno me aake.....mujko apna banake....*

*Mujpe tu kar ehsaan....jiya dhadak dhadak ...jiya dhadak dhadak jaaye...*

Wow. She had the best smile ever. And everyone clapped loudly...

“So sweet. You are my best friend. Thanks a lot.” Riya was very happy.

I wanted her to realise how much I loved her. I needed a shoulder to lean on, for listening patiently to my personal problems. I wanted her to realise she was the only girl who excited and thrilled me. When I was with her, I felt like I was out of control! When I was with her, I felt no fear, not even one. I admit that I have fallen for her.

“Are you in love with her?” Swapnil asked me when we went to order a sandwich

“Yes, I am in love with her. I am crazy about her,” I replied.

“Then go and tell her. I think she loves you too. I was observing her reaction when you were singing a song.”

“Maybe she loves me. However, I am not sure. Lets see.”

We had snacks. Riya was blushing all the time. This was the first time I saw her blush so much. If I could have just one wish, I would wish to wake up everyday, with the warmth of her lips on my cheeks, the touch of her fingers on my skin, and the feel of her heart beating with mine...I was deeply in love. This feeling never came with anyone. And I was sure it wouldn’t come with anyone in future also. I wanted to say to her that “*I love you Riya*”...

10<sup>th</sup> November. The prelim exams started. The first paper was Applied chemistry. I was blank. I was unaware of syllabus also. Riya's roll no was 33 and mine was 36. She got a seat in front of me. There were four students in each row. I didn’t know a single word. The professor started distributing papers. I requested Riya to show me whatever she was writing. I just wanted to write something on the answer paper. I was looking at the question paper. There were five questions of 10 marks each. I was seeing the questions for the first time. I was not surprised. I had never studied earlier. Riya started writing. I was constantly whispering in her ears to show me. After writing one page, she passed on the paper to me. I started copying whatever she had written. She had answered two questions. I gave her paper back after sometime. The professor never noticed these things. I just checked whatever I had written.

I did not understand anything. I just left. Everyone started smiling as I was leaving in about 20 to 25 minutes.

I went outside the college to chacha's tapri. I lit a cigarette and was thinking about Riya. We had known each other only for a couple of weeks and she already had me completely and totally to herself. I didn't even want to think about being with anyone else. I thought that if I could keep myself busy, I would be okay, but I can't forget and I'm not okay. I am so overwhelmed by my feelings for her. I need to hear her voice always. I need to feel her touch always. I was madly in love with her. I wanted to tell her that she was everything to me. She was the one for me. I just could not imagine her with anyone else. I was becoming possessive.

However, did she think in the same way? What if she loved someone else? No, she didn't love any one she had said that day. But what if she was lying. No, she would not lie; I could see the love in her eyes for me. I could feel her love towards me. But was it true love? What was it? I had to know everything. I could not wait like this. What if she rejected me? What if she didn't want anything beyond friendship?

All thoughts were running in my mind. I left the tapri and started moving towards college. I wanted to shout all the way. *I love you Riya. I can't imagine my life without you. I love you a lot*

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## 14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER- A DAY TO REMEMBER

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Saturday evening I was just chilling out. Playing games on my pc.I logged on gmail chat.Riya was online.

ME: hi, whats up?

Riya: nothing special was just checking mails.

ME: important mails?

Riya: no yaar, just casual ones.

ME: so what's up with my wife? How was her day?

Riya: what wife re, I am not your wife.

ME: you are my wife. *tujhe dekh dekh sona....*

Riya: tell me one thing seriously, will you?

ME: carry on. I will try

Riya: do you just joke or are you serious?

ME: regarding what, MY WIFE thing?

Riya: ya exactly.

ME: what you think? Am I joking or am I serious?

Riya: I think you are joking. Seems so.

ME: shall I tell you frankly?

Riya: Yes, I want to know what is in your mind.

ME: ok listen, I am serious. You are my wife.

Riya: kidding?

ME: no, I am very much serious.

Riya: I do not think so, any ways bye. I have to leave.

ME: now what is this? why are you leaving? you are ignoring the topic???

Riya: I have to leave. Sorry my husband. ha ha...chat with you on sms. bye.

It made me very angry. Why did she always avoid this topic? Why do these girls like to irritate us. Why could they not be straightforward? I took my cell and sent her a text.

Dear, I am serious and I will tell what I want to say in front of everyone. I hope you will not let me down. Monday I will tell you something that my heart says. Is it ok?

1 message received.

Its ok. I will not let you downJ

I called her up. She was in a bus. She was coming from her class. I asked her was she serious and wouldn't let me down, or she was taking it lightly.

“Aadi am serious. I will not let you down. You say whatever you want to say. Even I am serious.”

“Pakka, your sure? It will be embarrassing for me if you....”

“Don't worry my husband. I will not let you down. Do whatever you want.”

“Are you sure I can do whatever I want in public?” I started flirting.

“Naughty, keep the phone down bye.” She hung up.

I gave a thought to the matter. Was she serious? I was seriously going to propose her on Monday. I hoped she would say yes. It was a weird feeling. Nervousness, excitement, fear everything together.

*I hope she loved me*

**Was it a beginning of my relation...?**

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What would happen if she came to know about my past relationships? Would she accept me? I wanted to tell her that I had relationships in past. I wanted to tell her that she was not the first girl in my life. Nevertheless, she would be the last girl in my life. I was really amazed by her beauty. The way she used to talk with me. The way she cared for me. The way she used to force me to eat in the break. The way she used to send me a sweet good morning sms. The way we used to talk during nights. Everything was special. I could love her and appreciate her more than my life.

I thought of just flirting with her. It was already 11pm. But still I messaged her.

Are your legs tired?

She replied: why?

Because the entire day you were running through my mind. Arent you tired?

“Shut up Aadi...and go to sleep. Miss you. Take care.gn.sd.”

She loved me. She surely did. I wanted her to be with me always. She was creating magic in my life. Life had changed. I had become more responsible.

I called Sameer and Swapnil in morning. I asked them to meet me immediately. I was very much anxious to tell them whatever had happened; Whatever messages Riya and I shared with each other.

When I told them about every single sms after meeting them, they were not surprised. They knew this was bound to happen.

“So are you serious about her” Swapnil asked me.

“Yes, this time I am serious. Trust me. I want to marry her.”

“Did you tell her about your previous relationships?” Sameer added.

“No yaar, I will tell her on Tuesday itself after midterms get over.”

“Aadi she is a very sweet girl. I do not want any excuse later on. Are you serious about her? I treat her like my sister. I will kill you if your intentions are just to sleep with her.” Swapnil raised his voice.

“I am really serious man. Please do not take me wrong. I do not have any bad feelings about her. I really love her a lot. I just think of her all the time. It never happened before. If it was lust then I would have thought about her only when I was naked. However, it’s not the case. I want her to be my wife. Someone please trust me.”

They both looked at each other and finally smiled and said

“So what’s the plan for tomorrow?”

“I haven’t thought about it right now. All I know is I want 14<sup>th</sup> November to be special. It should be remembered by me for the rest of my life. I want to show her I can really keep her happy. If some one could love her more than me then he would be the person who would write her name on sun with ice. He would be the only one who could love her more than me.”

“Have you asked her about her past?” Sameer asked

“No I haven’t, but she said during the game in the canteen that she doesn’t love anyone. So I did not think of asking her.”

“Aadi it was just a game. Maybe she also had a relationship earlier.”

“Oh shut up. This can’t happen. I know she is beautiful. She is hot. But she won’t lie. I trust her.” We all left after that. Till then we had smoked almost 10 cigarettes.

14<sup>th</sup> November. Monday. The day, which was going to be remembered forever. The day, I would get my love. The day, which would bring sunshine in my life. I won’t be the same Aadi anymore. I would be committed. I would be committed to a girl who was too good for me. She was the girl next door. Every boy would want a girlfriend like her. Every man would want a wife like her. However, I was the lucky one. God was showering all the happiness on me. It never rained in November. But today life would make me wet by raining on me. Each droplet will give a new face to my life. I really thanked God that I decided to do engineering. Otherwise I wouldn’t have met Riya.

1 message received. It was Riya.

*Jab achanak unki yaad aati hai,*

*Dil me dhadkan rukh jaati hai,*

*Itni khoobsoorat hai unki aankhein,*

*Ki unse nazar milte hi,*

*Hamari nazar jhuk jaati hai.*

*I am waiting to listen to what you are thinking right now. Meet you in college.*

*I replied...*

*I am waiting for you to respond...*

*She replied.*

*What are you wearing? Wear green, it suits you. What should I wear?*

*I replied...*

*Wear anything dear, you look beautiful in any colour.*

*The best possible messages at that moment. It meant she also loved me. She did.*

I wore a green shirt and left for college. On the way, I purchased a snow spray and ribbon spray used for birthday parties. I also purchased a red rose. We had maths paper at 11am. I was standing on the third floor. I saw her entering the college. My heart skipped a beat. She was looking amazing. I loved her too much. The paper started. I left the classroom in 15 min and told Riya and Swapnil to leave. I had told Sameer to keep his mobile on vibrator mode so that he could leave the paper as soon as I call him. He also joined us. Within 10 minutes, we were at the gate of our college.

I told everyone that we were going to the garden behind our college. Riya refused to come there. I feared that she was going to reject the proposal. Swapnil convinced her. They both shared a healthy relationship. She agreed and I told Swapnil and Riya to go ahead. I explained Sameer what my plan was and handed over the spray to him. I went ahead and asked Swapnil to wait for Sameer as he was the one who would explain Swapnil what the plan was. Riya and I moved ahead. We reached the garden.

I could feel the sense of fear in Riya's eyes. Every girl has this fear. Even I was a bit nervous.

“What do you want to say? Why have you brought me here?” Riya asked me as if she did not know what was happening.

“You know why you are here. Dont you?”

“Yes I know it. But I want to hear it from you.”

I had kept the rose in one hand, hiding it from her. She had a mischievous look in her eyes. My heartbeats were increasing continuously. I never had this feeling before. Should I go ahead and do whatever I had planned or should I keep it simple? However, I wanted this moment to be special. Not simple. I looked into her eyes. It said the same. She also wanted this moment to be special. Every girl wants that her guy should propose to her in the best way he can. Riya was no different. I decided to make it special.

“Ready?” I asked her.

“Yes, go on.” she replied.

## ***And the special moment began.***

*I told her to close her eyes. She was afraid of doing that. I told her to trust me. She closed her eyes. I gave a look at Swapnil and Sameer. They were ready with what they had to do. Even I was prepared. I bent down on my knees, kept the rose in my hand and said...*

*You are my best friend. A friend like you is hard to get. However, a life partner like you for a person like me is impossible...*

*She opened her eyes and looked at me.*

*Really, I don't deserve a girl like you, I am a flirt, I have the worst image, but still I want to change. I want to improve. I want a girl who can improve me. And its you my bachha. I know you are the one and only, you are my everything. You are the love of my life. I love you babe. And every time I see you, I just want to hug you and never let you go. You are special to me. You make me complete. I will never leave you alone in this relationship. Love you. Do you wish to be my beloved?*

*She had tears in her eyes. Tears of happiness. She just nodded and said...*

*I love you too my bachha...love you a lot. Thanks for this moment.*

*She accepted the rose. I stood up and we hugged each other. As soon as we hugged each other, Sameer started blowing the snow spray and Swapnil blew the ribbon spray. Snow and ribbons were all over our bodies.*

*She was overwhelmed with whatever I had done for her. We hugged each other for sometime. We looked into each other's eyes. Her eyes asked me whether I would be with her forever. My eyes replied to her that I was with her always & forever...*

We left the garden, holding hands, looking in to each others eyes. It was so beautiful. A new life had started. I succeeded in making this moment memorable for our lifetime.

I tried hard to control my feelings, but was falling for her deeper with each passing day. I tried to hide my love from her. I tried to convince my heart that she was just a friend. But it was a lie. Deep inside I was falling in love. I tried to avoid looking into her eyes. But I couldn't.

A simple glance turned into a stare. Still I pretended that I did not care.

However, today I am with her. I am with my love. I hope it's not a dream. I wanted someone to pinch me. I hoped everything was real. I wanted to shout to the whole world that I was in love.

I called her as soon as I reached home.

“What is my bachha doing?” I asked her.

“I am making tea for my mom. Then I have to go to the general stores. And later I have to teach my brother.”

“Uhhh, packed schedule. Good. What about your husband? Even I want to have tea made by you”

“Come home then. My mom will give you tea. In addition, sweets also. After all her son in law would be coming home for the first time.”

“Let it be. Better, I stay at home. You do your work.”

“Miss you. I want to give you a tight hug, you made my day special. I have saved it in my notes. Thanks for everything. It was the best. I can't get better life partner than you.”

“Even I am missing you a lot. You just want to hug me. I am feeling like kissing you, touching your hair. Hugging you tight.” romance was in my mind and I said it.

“You are very smart. I will not talk on this topic. Love you bachha. Miss you. Now shall I keep the phone down? I have lots of work.”

“Ok keep it. Bye. Do miss me.”

I went to my bedroom and relaxed on my bed. I wanted her beside me.

*I could not sleep as I was thinking of her. This kind of love was new to me. It was true love. It made my stomach full of butterflies. I loved her a lot.*

*It was a special night. I wanted to be with her. I was experiencing the feeling of first love. I was not able to sleep. I was not able to concentrate on anything. Whenever I closed my eyes all the moments flashed in front of me. I was proud of myself to propose to her in a special way. I had seen many of my friends proposing. But I had never seen anyone doing this. I can assure that if anything went wrong between us in future we both couldn't forget this moment. It was something unusual. It was unique. We did not get time to hang out somewhere, but even the little time spent with her holding her hands and looking at her, staring at her was special. Today I realized what love was, why people used to say falling in love is always wonderful. I was feeling it today. You may achieve everything in your life, money, status, power everything, but it could not overcome the happiness of what it was to be with the one you loved.*

16<sup>th</sup> November. Midterms ended. We decided to go out somewhere. It was our first date. We did not plan for it though. We decided to go to a shopping mall. RMALL. We left college as soon as we finished our last paper. We were waiting for a train at Aerol station. Swapnil and Sameer were at the station itself.

“See how friends change when they get a girlfriend.” Swapnil said to Sameer jokingly.

“Oh cummon, Aadi has not changed. I told him to leave immediately after the paper.” Riya replied.

“Now you take his side. Very good.”

“Stop it yaar, Swapnil. We are going to a mall.

The train came and we left. Riya was not used to train journeys. She stood close to me and held my hand tightly. I loved it. I loved the fragrance of her body. I was showing her the poster in the train that had the names of the stations of central railway. She gave me a confused look. She used to give this look often. It used to make me smile. Her innocence came out in look. She did not care about the world. All she cared for was me. I felt special to have her in my life. We had to catch another train to our destination. She did not like trains. I could see it in her eyes.

“Bachha 5 minutes and we will reach” she came close to me.

“This is frustrating. We could have come by rickshaw.” She was really frustrated by so much crowd.

“Leave it now, we are about to reach.”

We reached Mulund. It was a crowded station. We caught a rickshaw to reach R MALL. We were carrying a folder in our hand which had all the assignments and experiments. I kept it behind the seat in the rickshaw.

As the rickshaw passed, I came closer to her. I put my hand on her shoulder. She blushed.

“Love you.”

“Love you too.” I wanted to hear it from her always. It made me realise this was not a dream.

I got closer to her. There was hardly any distance between our lips. We were both staring at each other. There was silence. A sense of fear. A sense of love. Her eyes spoke a lot. They told me how much she loved me. She whispered the same in my ears and closed her eyes. I just could not imagine. I saw her when she entered the classroom. I talked to her. I flirted with her. I cared for her. I proposed to her. Our relationship was moving so fast that now 2 days after I proposed to her I was in a rickshaw with her so close that hardly any air passed between us. I was about to kiss her. Kiss her in public. Who cares? We both loved each other so much we never cared what was around us. We were deeply in love.

Her eyes were closed. I went closer to her. I remembered Nikita...

Will she be a better kisser than Nikita? Nikita was hot. Experienced may be. What if even Riya is experienced? I did not care. I loved her. However, she never told me about her earlier relationships.

My hand was resting gently on her cheek, while my fingertip slowly moved down her neck. She was breathing heavily but I was nervous. As I was listening to the sound of her breath, her hand began slowly to move up along my back. I felt the movement of her cheek. I began to inch towards her. My heart began to beat faster, and the closer I got, the more nervous I became. My hand moved around to the back of her neck and into her hair. As I reached her, I could hear my heartbeat echoing throughout my head. I backed out and my cheek came to rest on hers. I was disappointed with myself, but she turned her head towards me, gently encasing my bottom lip between hers. My fear instantly dissipated and I kissed back, leading to the most romantic embrace with both of us smiling between each perfect kiss. Our lips met. Our first kiss that lasted until we reached the mall. It was out of the world. I was a fool to compare it with anyone. It was almost nerve wracking.

“Please don’t leave me ever.” Riya feared that I might leave her.

“No my jaan I wont leave you. I cannot live without you now. I cannot get any one better than you. Infact I do not want anyone better than you. Love you.”

We got down from the rickshaw. The driver gave us a strange look. Maybe he was watching whatever was happening. However, such experiences are nice. I enjoyed it. *MY FIRST KISS TO MY LOVE.*

We entered the mall. Food court. I ordered my favourite paav bhaaji. We decided to share it. It’s an out of the world feeling when your girlfriend feeds you with her own hand. Riya was looking more beautiful when she was feeding me. My love for her was increasing day by day. It was like wine. The older it gets the better it is. Romance was in the air. Each moment with her was like whisky. The more I spent time with her, the more I went out of my senses.

“Aadi... lets watch a movie.”

“Now, see the time. Its 3:30pm. wont we be late to go home?”

“I will manage. You also manage it. Now cummon. Please.”

“Don’t say please, let’s go. Let’s check the movies and movie timings.”

We went to R adlabs. There was only one show in next hour. It was 3:45pm.

“Are you sure, you want to watch this movie?”

“Yes, let’s buy the tickets.”

3:45pm Tajmahal screen 2.

I wondered what these girls think. Maybe they just want to spend some quality time with us. Some private time. But Tajmahal was too much. We went into the theatre.

“Stand up for national anthem”

I hate it. I really did. Not because I hated the national anthem but because few people never respected it. They just sit on their chairs eating popcorn. Moreover, the national anthem should never be played in a closed room. The movie started. It showed some king Khurram, Mumtaaz and Shahjaan. I ignored them all. I was just glancing at the innocence in Riya’s eyes. They were charming.

“How much do you love me” she asked

“A lot (ati)” I said

“I love you more than that (ati peksha ati)”

It was so sweet. I kissed her hand. She gave me a smile. We just looked at each other. This was the first time I touched her. I could clearly tell there was definitely a connection. I felt many butterflies in my stomach but when I touched her, they all flew away and we actually had to stop because both of us were smiling so much. I just couldn't stop smiling. Throughout the movie we were engrossed in cosy moments. I never thought my first date with her will take us into a deep passionate relationship. I could sense the fear and excitement in her. She was bold. She was sweet too. Very rarely does a girl have both qualities. I was lucky to have them in Riya. We did not exchange a single word but our eyes said it all. As the lights were on, we realised the movie was over. I just knew the few characters of the movie. Apart from that I knew nothing.

“What will you tell your friends? We watched Taj Mahal. And if you say so dear, what story are you going to tell.” I teased her.

“Shut up.” she had a blush on her face.

“Tell them that it was a silent movie with all passion in it. The actress was rather bold and the actor feared her boldness. The actress had sharp teeth too.” I again continued teasing her.

“ Stop it aadi. You are very naughty. Lets leave. Its late.”

“ I am like this from childhood. But I really love you a lot now. Always be with me.”

We smiled and as I left the mall, I realized I had left the folder in the rickshaw. Those moments were so intimate that I totally forgot that I had kept the folder behind the seat.

“Jaan, I left the folder in the rickshaw” somehow, I managed to tell Riya.

“What? Are you serious? You are so dumb yaar. Now what?”

“I don’t know. We have lost it. I can not think what we will do now” I was worried.

“You screwed it man; you should have realized it earlier at least.” She adjusted her bag and looked furiously at me.

“Now what?”

“We have to write it again and submissions are 6 days away. When will we complete so many write ups? How could you forget it?” she was almost in tears.

“Leave it jaan, I will write everything. I will write for you also. Dont worry. You are such a passionate kisser that I forgot everything. I could only feel your lips.”

“Be serious Aadi. Some times at least.”

“Ok fine, seriously I am telling you I will handle it. Trust me.”

Even I was worried. How will I be able to write so much? If I had shown that, even I was nervous she would have started crying. I did not want to end the day crying. I just consoled her. But what next? Each subject has almost 7 to 8 write-ups and 5 subjects. It means almost 35. Moreover I said I would write Riya’s write up also. That made it 70. Impossible. I was screwed. Why on the earth did I have to keep it behind the seat?

I went with her to drop her home by bus. She was worried and I could see it. I tried to make her laugh and smile by re-collecting all our memories from the day we met. She smiled finally. Now my day was made.

We got down from the bus. Walking together during the night with your girlfriend is romantic. We walked till the rickshaw stand. She left. I reached home. Submissions were going to be the worst, I said to myself. *Good start to engineering life.*

All that made me happy was that I had met Riya. Nothing else was good. It was terrible. 70 write-ups in 5 days.

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## **TOO FAST TOO CLOSE**

Lectures were over. We had leave. Study leave. We call it PL. Submissions remained. Classes had to finish the prescribed chapters. It was already mid November. Exams were declared on Dec 7. I was writing all the assignments for Riya and me. Riya was also helping me. We had classes almost every evening. It was difficult for us to meet now. Our classes were different. Therefore, we decided to bunk classes and meet in the evening. The syllabus had been almost covered. Not many important topics remained. We decided to meet in central garden near our class. Not everyday but alternate day atleast.

Central garden was one of the famous grounds in central Mumbai. During the daytime all kids played cricket and football. Mostly cricket. And it became lovers point in the evening after sunset. Couples

used to hang around, used to get close to each other. People who used to walk on the roadside could not see anything on the ground clearly due to darkness. That made couples go beyond their limits.

We also decided to meet there after 6:30pm. She came by rickshaw from Aerol, Navi Mumbai. I must say she was looking most beautiful since I had known her. So hot that any one could lose control. She was wearing a black top that revealed her cleavage. And, a white long skirt. I appreciated her beauty. She gave me a naughty smile. We went to the ground. We sat there and talked. I asked her about her family and where she had studied earlier.

“Ameya, my brother is in 7<sup>th</sup> standard. He is in Xavier’s School in Aerol itself. We shifted here a few years back due to my father’s business. I do not have many friends here just 3 to 4 friends. 1 is from our college. The rest are from my neighbourhood. Actually I really hate staying in Aerol. But I do not have any option. I got admission in this college through management quota. It’s a boring life here in Aerol. Western Mumbai was much better. We used to have a lot of fun there. All my friends are there. We used to go shopping, for movies and had an awesome life there. But due to dad’s business in Navi Mumbai we are here.”

“Ok. I must thank your dad that he took the decision to settle here in Aerol. If he had not taken that decision we would not have been sitting together here.”

She smiled and I kissed her forehead.  
She asked me about myself.

“I have one sister Ketki. She is very sweet. We have the same bonding that you share with your brother. My family is very open with me. My dad is an engineer and works on ships. He stays away for 2 months and then is on leave for 2 months. My mom works in a government office. It’s a normal life. Nothing special. Nevertheless, I love my family a lot. They mean a lot to me.”

“Do you smoke?” she asked me.

“Sometimes. Not a chain smoker. To be frank I smoked my first cigarette 2 months back with Sameer and Anup. I had never smoked before that. I don’t drink also.”

“You never told me before that you smoke. You should have told me”

“Jaan, I don’t smoke regularly.”

I went close to her. I kissed her on the lips. Maybe it was the right time to kiss her to avoid a fight on smoking. It was better than the first kiss. This time it was more passionate. My hand was out of control. It was dark. No one around. I looked here and there. No one was around us. We were alone at the centre of ground sitting and getting cosy with each other. She held me closely as I kissed her. She opened two buttons of my shirt and my hands went inside her top. It brought shivers in my body. Her hand slipping inside my shirt. And my hand rolling over her breasts inside her top. The touch was amazing. I really thought our relationship was moving too fast. 6 days after the proposal we were at the centre of the ground in the dark. Was it good? Was it decent to do these things?  
Who cares? I continued cuddling her, kissing her. She put her teeth deep inside my neck.

“Jaan, easy we are in public.” I said it naughtily.

“I want to give you a love bite which is visible to everyone, so that no girl will come close to you.”

“Why will a girl come close to me? I am always with you. How can I go to someone else?”

“Still let the world know that you are mine. Just mine. And no one can get you now. I love you. Love you a lot. You are my kid. My bachha. So innocent. So sweet. My MR PERFECT.”

“Ok jaan. Then let me give you a love bite too.”

I kissed her hard below her neck until she moaned.

“Now no one will come close to you also. I can't see you going with some one else. Please never ever leave me. I am all yours now.”

After this cute romantic conversation we left for home. I had my dinner and I called her up.

“Hey tomorrow also the same time. We won't go to class. we will meet up.”

“Aadi... do you want kt?”

“No I want you. I need you beside me. I will wait for you.”

I hung up. I knew she would come. She never showed that she needed me. She wanted me beside her. But I knew. I reached the ground. She had reached there before me and was waiting. She had worn my favourite red top and a skirt. We had Pani Puri and sat on the ground like the previous day. Without waiting, we were onto each other. We just used to find a chance to make up. A new passion of a new relationship. She was driving me crazy by her touches and her looks. Her expressions. My fingers rolling all over her body. I realised she had worn bikini type panties. That was my fantasy. I had told her once. It meant she wanted me to touch her. I did not cross my limits. It was not the right time. But it was one of the sexiest moments that we both shared.

We adjusted ourselves and she asked me

“Are you touching a girl for the first time?”

A sensation of fear went through my body. Within a second, my dick came back to normal size. What was going to happen next? She had asked a question that would have shattered everything. Definitely, she was not the first girl I was touching. Should I tell her the truth or hide it?

“What happened bacchu, answer me?” I knew she wanted to hear positive response. But it wasn't the case. I had to answer it.

I somehow held my nerves and said 'no'.

She was not surprised by this. She gave me a normal look.

“What happened?” I asked.

“I knew this jaan. The way you were getting close to me. The way you touched me. The way you kissed me. The first kiss on the first date. I knew I am not the first girl in your life.”

“I wanted to tell you this. But I never got a chance. You are right. You are not the first girl in my life. But I never crossed my limits with any girl. I was never so physical with any one. Trust me”

I was afraid of losing her. I hoped she would trust me.

“Yes, I do trust you. I am not fighting with you, I am not upset. I knew this the very first day when you kissed me. But I thought you would tell me this thing someday. But you didn’t.”

“Sorry jaan, I thought I might lose you. And I can’t afford to lose you. I am really sorry.”

She smiled and hugged me. I almost cried at that moment. She kissed my eyes. I was not able to believe that this girl loved me so much. She could forgive me in a few minutes. I loved her more. I gave her a sweet kiss on her cheeks.

“Can I ask you one thing?”

“Yes. She said.”

“One thought came in my mind just now. You said you knew I was with a girl earlier by my kissing style or touching style. But how? If I am the first person in your life how did you know these things? I mean obviously the kiss and touches; you must have felt for the first time. Then how can you.....”  
She gave me a tough look.

“Who said you are the first? I never said it jaan.”

“Means, you had a relationship earlier. But you said during truth or dare. That you just love your brother. You said it right?”

“Ya I said it but I had a relation earlier. When I was in junior college. It was for just 4 months. He was Christian. I never liked his family. I do not know the reason why he broke up with me. I do not care now. I love you and you are the only one for lifetime now. Love you  
*I was thrashed. I was broken into pieces when I heard this. She had lied.*

I did not do anything different. Even I had lied. No, I did not. I just didn’t tell her I had a relationship. I never said I did not have a relationship. She did lie. She had said she was never in a relationship. Did it mean I was not the first person to touch her? Did it mean I was not the first person to slip my hand in her top or did it mean she would leave me also? Tears came in my eyes. I did not care if someone had touched her. I loved her. I loved her more than anything else. These small issues will not come in my love. However, she should have told me.

“Don’t worry jaan; I will always be with you. I will never leave you” tears rolled down her eyes also.

She put my head in her lap as a mother explains something to her son. She really loved me. Everyone has a past. Even she had. I had the worst possible one. I tried to think about the present and our future.

I smiled at her and kissed her eyes. It was an emotional moment. But it made our relation pure. Now it was a transparent relationship. I was happy she had told me the truth. I was upset. But it's because I couldn't see her or even imagine her with someone else. I just loved her too much. We did not speak a word and we left just looking in each other's eyes. Our relationship moved one-step ahead. Emotional attachment. I still felt it was moving too rapidly. Now I couldn't live without her. I don't think even she could. I wanted to ask one thing but it would have made the situation worse. Even she hadn't asked me that. I stopped myself. That question killed me from inside. She did answer it indirectly that she was not as close to him as she was to me.

*But was she really a virgin? What if she was not? Would it affect my love for her?*

I don't think so. It was all about trust and feelings that we shared. It was a new world...we are now attached to each other emotionally.

As I reached home I got the best possible sms for that moment. She was the best. She knew how to make me happy. She knew how to make me feel that she was always there.

One message received. It was Riya.

I was afraid she had sent me something that would hurt me. However, It was the most romantic sms from her which made me speechless.

*"I love the way you look at me, your eyes so naughty and mischievous.*

*I love the way you kiss me, your lips so soft and smooth.*

*I love the way you make me happy, and the way you show your care for me. I love the way you say, "I Love you,"*

*And the way you are always there. I love the way you touch me, always sending chills down my spine. I love that you are with me, and glad that you are mine...I will never leave you my bacchaa...*

*Does a mother ever leave her child alone? You are my cute little bachha. I am missing your touch. I am looking at the love bite in the mirror. I wish it was permanent You are very sweet. I am missing your kiss. I want to get close to you. You rock. I wonder why I met you so late. Anyways you are mine. And dare you leave me. Miss you...muuaahhh..."*

"Love you too." I replied.

She always told me to send her long sms that she could read again and again when I was not with her. But I never knew how to write such a long sms. I was trying to do it for her.

"I want a big sms. A long one. Else I won't talk to you" I got a reply from her.

These girls are too much. Whatever they want they need to have it. If we don't then they will not talk. All emotional drama. I had to do it. I had no option. I opened my inbox. Searched for sms. I got one sms. I started editing it. And added a few things and sent it to her. Then she was happy. Then she started behaving so nicely as if she has got the world. She did not know it was forwarded sms. But I loved that she was happy. Girls are so foolish. Still we boys love them. I did love her a lot. Anything to make her

smile. One cute sms can create a mood of romance. Its fun to chat naughty things at night. Especially when you have experienced emotional moments in the evening.

Sms said.....

*“Many a times we lose our special ones because we are unable to tell them how special they are, this sms is to tell my special one that you are the best thing that ever happened in my life that I never want to lose. You are the one who make me shiver every time you touch me. Every night I stay up late to talk to you. I love you a lot jaan, my feelings are strong and I can honestly say they will remain forever. Miss you. Love you. muaah...”*

...

“Aadi... wake up. Some rickshaw driver is here.” Mom woke me up

“Who rickshaw driver?” I asked

I then rememberd maybe he was the same rickshaw driver in whose auto I had lost my folder. I got up quickly and went to the hall. He was sitting there having a cup of tea. I thanked him for his kindness. I saw my folder and then realised Riya had written her name on it as well.

Riya Aditya.

Moreover, she had written her cell number on it. Maybe the driver had called her and she had given him my address. I asked him. I was right. Riya had sent him to me. I was so glad to see my folder. I had written just 20 assignments until now. Riya was an angel in my life. What had come to her mind to write her cell number on it I don't know. However, it saved us.

In all this process, I did not observe my moms reaction. She was surprised as to who Riya was, why her name was on my folder. I really hoped this driver had not told anything about that day. About whatever we did in Rickshaw. He had given the worst look that day when we had got down. After having a cup of tea, he left.

“Who is Riya? Why is her name on your folder?”

“Mom, she is my friend and she is slightly mad. She does these type of silly things. She wrote her name for timepass. Even cell number.”

“Don't tell me she is just a friend. If she is just a friend what were you doing with her in the rickshaw?”

Oh my God. I was gone. I wished I had a heart attack that moment. I was numb. I was not able to answer her. Did that driver tell my mom what we did? Bloody idiot. It would have been better if I had to write 50 more assignments than this scene.

“What did I do? I did nothing.”

“You went with her to RMALL. Why? What's going on between the two of you?” Mom asked angrily.

“Wait I am calling her”. Mom took her cell and dialled her number.

Her phone was ringing. I wanted to sms her don't pick up, But I could not. *What will be Riya's reaction? I hoped my mom wouldn't get angry with Riya. What would she think about my mom?*

My mom started talking to her.

“Hello, this is Aditya's mom. Thanks beta for telling that rickshaw driver the address.”

What would she reply. I wish I could hear it. I was carefully observing the expressions on my mom's face to guess what was happening on the other side.

“What were you two doing in Rmall? Just the two of you?”

If I had consulted an astrologer, he would have surely said I would die in 10 minutes. This was unreal man.

“Are you sure there is nothing between you two?”

No way. No way could I survive. I was sure Riya would have panicked.

“This should not happen again. Okay.Bye.”

What should not happen again? Did she mean kisses? Did she mean we should never be alone together? I wanted to call Riya to enquire what had happened. What had she told to my mom.

“I have asked her everything. Dare you repeat this thing again? Grow up and concentrate on studies. Exams are 20 days away.”

“I know it mom. Please don't irritate me. I know what to do and what not to do.” I went into my room and called up Riya.

“Hey, what happened? What were you saying to my mom?”

“Don't worry jaan. Why do you get tensed so easily? Take things lightly. I have handled everything. I told her we were not alone in Rmall. We went alone but our friends were waiting in the mall. I was late in reaching the station and I didn't knew the address so you waited and we reached the mall together. Ok now smile. Love you.”

“Oh God. You saved me. I thought you would panic. You are the best. How can you be so good all the time?”

“It's your love which makes me good all the time. Miss you. See you in college. Wait near Priyanka Hotel. I will reach around 10:45am.okay.Bye”

We had to reach college by 11pm to get our few assignments checked. We did it in an hour or so and I asked Riya where to go.

“Let’s go to Grant Lane,Vashi. It will be fun. I will show you a nice place.Mini Chowpatty. Even I have not gone there. Only heard of it. Let’s give it a try.”

“Hmm...Ya lets go by bus.”

We started walking toward bus depot. It was in sector 4, not far from my college. She had made fried rice for me. I must agree she is a superb cook. I appreciated her always.

We got a seat to sit in bus. Grant Lane was about 15km from college. As the bus left the depot, I told her to open her lunch box .I was desperate to have something cooked by her. She started feeding me with a spoon.

“Liked it?”

“Jaan, you are awesome. You are an angel. My pari. You can do anything in this world. Can’t you?”

“No, I can just love you and that is more than enough for me.” she played with my hair.

“Why do you love me so much? Am I really worth it?”

“Yes sweety, you are the only person worthy of it. I also don’t know why I love you. But I really care for you. I love to be with you. I love to play with your hair. I love the way you look at me. The innocence in your eyes brings me closer to you. You have a nice heart. You do not hide any thing from me. You are honest. I love this. And the way you proposed to me, I can never forget it in my life.”

“Can anyone propose to you like what I did?”

She did not say anything. She just came close to me and gave me a sweet kiss on my neck. It said all of it. No one could separate us now. Colors mixed once cannot be separated again. Our relationship was like those colours. It could not be separated.

We reached Grant Lane,Vashi depot. We got into a rickshaw. Mini Chow patty was hardly 5 minutes away. It was a quiet place. We had come to this place for the first time. We saw a few couples and few boys playing also. It was a very romantic place.

It was a big area. It had a lake. That’s why I thought it was called Mini Chowpatty.It had two gardens in front of the lake. They were well maintained. They had a nice places to sit for couples. There were trees at the back and a nice Lawn. We saw small huts at the back of the lakes. It was far away still we could see couples hanging out in those huts. It was really a romantic place. We loved it. There was a stall of Chinese food also. I found the place the best one to hang out with a girlfriend. Moreover, there were no street boys who passed comments. Therefore, it was not a cheap place either. The biggest advantage was there were no residential buildings beside it.

“Riya, this is an awesome place. We will come here regularly. What you think? Did you like it?”

“Yes, I loved this place. It is so quiet here. It gives a feel of romance.”

We sat in the garden and were looking at the view. It was romantic. I slept on her lap and she was playing with my hair. I was looking into her eyes and she into mine. She started playing with my eyelids. Each time she touched me it felt like she was touching me for the first time. It was so sensual. Just tickling them. It made me smile. She kissed me on my forehead. I was really enjoying each moment with her. I wanted to give her all the happiness that I could. I was satisfied with my life after meeting Riya. While I was giving a thought on this; I never came to know when I fell asleep. She was looking at me, staring at me when I was sleeping in her lap.

“Jaan, when did I doze off? Why didn’t you wake me up?” I got up and sat beside her.

“I was looking at you. You slept for almost 20 minutes. And I lived my life in these 20 minutes looking at you. I can tell you where each small black spot is on your face and on your neck. You look so cute when you sleep. Therefore, I did not wake you up. Love you.”

“Love you too”

For some strange reason she used to like my neck. What’s there to like in it? However, she used to. She was different. Crazy is the right word. She never told me the reason. However, she always used to kiss it. She used to catch it gently and say it was hers. And no one could touch it. Only she had the right to touch it. I used to smile. We loved each other beyond limits.

“Riya. I am going to teach you computer programming now”

“Aadi...please....I don’t want to study now. I want to talk to you. Please Aadi.”

“Stop it Riya. Exams are getting close and you don’t know this subject.”

I forced Riya to sit on the grass and open her books. She never loved studying. Nobody does. Even I did not. But we had to. Exams were getting closer. I started teaching her basics of programming, command; directories. She was listening to me carefully. After explaining to her she used to say she did not understand. The way she used to say it was very cute. It always made me kiss her. I didn’t give up until I taught her a few basic things.

We decided to come home by train. We would have reached home late by bus. It was already 8pm. Riya got down from the train at Aerol and I went ahead. It was another beautiful day. Each day was like honey. Sweeter and sweeter. I never thought I would love anyone so much.

“Why are you so late? Were you with Riya?” my mom asked me angrily.

“Mom, I had told you I had class. Didn’t I?”

“I thought you bunked and went to Mall.”

“Mom you are too much. Give me something to eat now and let me sleep.”

Mom had queried that I loved her. After all, she was my mom. She knew her son the best. My eyes and expressions said it all. She did not tell me anything directly as yet. However, somewhere I knew she liked Riya.

## SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

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-  
A submission is the worst period of engineering. Moreover, if your attendance is low it is worst. I knew my attendance was low in chemistry. I had to check two experiments also. I was worried as to what would the response of madam be when she came to know about my attendance and experiments. The professor did not have a good impression about me.

I reached college. Submissions had started. I went to the chemistry madam and told her about my status in chemistry. She smiled and said...

“No problem child, its ok. Come next year for submission. Why you want to do it so early. Enjoy yourself for a year and then come for submissions”

I almost had tears in my eyes. I requested her to accept my submissions. However, she was firm in whatever she said. Riya also was not with me. She was busy with her submission. I wanted her near me. Her support meant a lot to me. I called her up. She was busy in BEE lab. I was standing outside chemistry lab itself waiting for madam’s opinion to change. Nevertheless, it did not happen. She told me to leave. I left and did all other submissions. They were smooth. Riya had finished her submissions by then. She asked me,

“Is your submission over?”

“No, chemistry remains. She is not accepting my file. My attendance is low and I have to check 2 experiments also.”

“Its ok. Let me talk to her. I think she will accept it. She knows me very well.” Riya started walking towards chemistry lab.

Madam saw Riya outside the lab and called her inside. I also joined her.

“Riya, any problem?” madam asked while writing something on the attendance sheet.

“Madam, his experiments are to be checked. Please madam can you do it?”

“No I won't. Look at his attendance. 42%. If it was above 50% I would have thought of doing it. But now it's impossible.”

I was looking at Riya. She told me to relax.

“Madam, please, he won't do it again in the next semester. Please madam. I give you the assurance he won't repeat this mistake again. If he does you cancel my submission.”

“Riya, what's this. You are a nice girl. Why do you have friends like this?”

Bloody hell. What did she mean? I would have abused her there itself but I was quiet as I wanted my submissions to be done. I also pleaded with her and gave her the assurance regarding attendance for next semester.

“Riya, I am doing his submissions for you. You were nice the entire semester and I do not want you to be upset and affect your examination. Aditya, you should be thankful to her. Give me your file.”

Finally submissions done. I would have screwed my 1<sup>st</sup> year if it was not Riya.

Riya was a sweetheart. I could not have expected more from her. She did what no one could have done. My 1<sup>st</sup> year would have been ruined if Riya had not convinced chemistry madam. She had the power of convincing anyone. I was the best example. Her innocence while explaining things could convince anyone. Just one word for her. My sweetheart.

“Riya thanks, I would have failed if...”

“Just thanks, you owe me a party. Thanks will not do.”

“Ok fine. I don't have cash now. I will treat you few days later. I will take you to a movie. Is it fine?”

“Yes. Perfect” she kissed my lips softly. It was sudden.

My eyes rolled. I looked here and there to see if somebody had watched it. We were in the passage of the college near the canteen. It is at the back of the college where generally there is no one. I was relieved when I confirmed no one watched it.

“Are you crazy? We are in the college.”

“I don't care. Your lips are mine. I can touch them whenever I want. I don't have to take permission from you.” Riya kissed me again.

I did not argue this time. The girl who can argue with the chemistry madam who was about to fail me, could do anything. She had guts. I did not. And I loved her for all these crazy things.

We went home. I did not say anything to my parents about my submission. I just went to my room and switched on my computer. Orkut was my favorite time pass. I used to check Riya's scraps also just to keep an eye on her. I was possessive about her. She was no different. We were happy in each other's arms. We did not want anyone to know that we were together.

I remembered I had to take her to a movie. I checked on cinemax site, to see which movies were showing. There were no good movies, which were released. I called her to check if she was sure about the movie. She never refused for movies. We decided to watch a movie on Saturday.

She also came online.

Riya: Hey, which movie shall we watch?

Me: Don't know, lets see after we reach there. Are you excited?

Riya: Excited? What for? Didn't get you?

Me: Forgot what we did last time in the theatre.

Riya: Stop it. Love you.

Me: Blushing? I want to see you blushing. Shall I make you blush more?

Riya: No need to see me blushing. How will you make me blush more?

Me: By doing, something more than what I did that day. I want you to be just mine. I want you just for me. Even you can do what you want. Love you a lot. Miss you. Eat dinner properly. See you on Saturday. Wear a skirt. If possible, bring me fried rice.

I logged out. I wanted the entire day to be special. I got small gift for her from Archies. I also took a few chocolates for her. She loved chocolates.

I kept the gift carefully in my room. The chocolates in the refrigerator.

Saturday morning. She met me by 11am. We reached Cinemax in a few minutes. We checked out the show timings. There was not even a single good movie. Ultimately, we took the tickets for the movie HOME DELIVERY. Show timing was 1pm.

We went to Pizza Hut. I ordered one spicy veggie and a coke.

“Jaan I have 2 surprises for you. You will love them.”

“Seriously? What are they? Please show me.”

“Not now. You will have to wait for it.” I showed her the packet. She was excited. She loved surprises.

“Even I have one surprise for you.” Riya pointed at her bag.

It made me so much excited that I almost grabbed her bag. However, she did not allow me to open it. I gave her the wrapped box of chocolates and told her to open it. As she saw chocolates, she got hold of my cheeks and pinched it hard, it pained me. But it showed me that she loved them. We shared the first chocolate. Now I requested her to show what she had with her.

She handed it over to me. I opened it. IT WAS A WATCH.

“Superb, it’s really nice. From where did you get it?”

“You didn’t have a watch, So I thought I would get one for you. Thank God you liked it.”

“It’s your choice. How will I not like it? It’s really superb.”

It was so sweet of her. The watch was not branded, but I really loved it as it showed the time of love...

“Now show me what you have with you. Please. I am excited and want see it.”

“Not now dear, wait for sometime. It will be special.”

I wanted to give that gift to her as the movie starts. I never thought that Riya would love me so much that she would bring me a surprise. I knew she liked surprises, but this time she was giving it. We finished eating our pizza. I paid the bill and we left. Still 30 min were left for the movie to start. I told Riya that I wanted to smoke. I asked her permission. She did not refuse it. She always used to tell me to smoke within limit. Not daily. I never smoked daily. I went to tapri and lit a cigarette. We were sitting outside Cinemax. She asked me

“Why do you smoke?”

“Why do you love me?” I asked her.

“Because you are good looking, you have good nature and you know how to make me happy.” I was expecting this answer.

“The same is the case with a cigarette. She looks nice in my hand and she knows how to make me happy.”

She laughed. It was a joke.

We went inside the theatre. 1<sup>st</sup> row from screen. Theatre was almost empty. We had no choice other than watching this movie. I liked Ayesha Takia so did not have any issues. Moreover in trailers she had been shown in just one white long shirt. Nothing beneath. That would be exiting. Movie started. I removed the second surprise from my bag and put it in her hands. She had a shine in her eyes. She was looking more beautiful. She always looked more beautiful whenever she had a surprise in front of her. She opened it.

“So sweet, it’s an awesome ring. Love you a lot. You are the best boyfriend in the world”

I put the ring in her finger. She hugged me immediately. It brought tears in her eyes. We had started loving each other to extreme. It was a special moment. She was hugging me continuously for 5 minutes. She kissed the ring. It was studded with a diamond. Not a real diamond obviously. However, it was cute.

“I will always wear it and whenever I miss you, whenever I am alone I will kiss this ring. Now you will always be with me. Thanks for such a wonderful gift. You are my MR PERFECT. I was right. No one can take your place.

I kissed her and grabbed her towards me. She kissed my chest and neck. I never saw her as happy as she was today. I could feel her happiness by her touches. I started getting naughty with her...we were at our best whenever we were in theatre. It’s really thrilling, Just imagine her reaching over and grabbing for some popcorn from the box on my lap and grabbing something besides popcorn.....oooooops. It feels good. She was shocked but she was eager to see what was in my mind.

After reaching home. She sent me a text.

“Now I am all yours. For lifetime. You must be thinking you gave me two surprises, but you gave me three in all. The third one I can’t describe it to you, but its always precious for girl. Give some strain to your brain and you will realise it. Thanks for everything. I am kissing my ring. I am missing you more than ever today. It was the most beautiful day ever in my life. I have saved the date in my mobile. 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Love you jaan. bye. gn.”

After thinking for 3 hours, I realised what she meant exactly. This made me love her more. She was frank and honest. I loved her behaviour. I liked her by her looks when she came to college. I had taken a chance to propose to her. And today I was deeply in love with her. I could break all boundaries and go beyond my limits. We were made for each other.

It was time for night outs. Hot coffees, radio and some snacks. It was time to study for the 1<sup>st</sup> semester exams. I had never studied earlier except for two subjects. Mechanics and computer programming. I was unaware of the syllabus of the other subjects. Exams were 4 days away. 1<sup>st</sup> paper was applied mechanics. I had almost done with it. Still had to go through it once. It was around 2am that I called Riya.

“How much did you study?”

“I am doing statics. Its tough. I think I will get kt.” She replied

“Don’t worry. You study. I will not disturb you. Miss you”

I kept the phone. I also called Sameer, Swapnil and Anup to enquire what they had studied. They were also studying statics. I was done with statics, was doing dynamics. I found mechanics easy. Generally, students find it difficult.

“So finally done? When are you reaching college? I will be there at 10am. I am tensed. Let’s see what happens...” Swapnil had called me.

“I will be there at the same time. Almost done. Let’s see.”

I called Riya. Even she had finished studying. 40 was the golden figure we all were looking for.

30 min before exam, Sameer was still reading. He used to read until the end moment. Until he entered the classroom.

“Oye topper, close the book.” Swapnil teased him.

“Shut up yaar, I am not able to remember anything. I am going to screw this paper.”

“Oh God, if you are in such a situation after studying so much then what will happen to us?”

“Stop it yaar Swapnil. Please let me study.”

He never looked up. Standing outside the classroom, he was reading intently as if going through a porn magazine. Finally, we entered the classroom. I checked out which bench I had. I was really wishing to get the last or second last bench. I saw my seat number on the bench. It was third row. Sameer got the first bench. His mouth was open for a few minutes. My heartbeats increased. Swapnil had mini Xerox in his pocket. He was not worried. I never knew how to copy. I never carried any Xerox with me. I used to pamper the person in front of me. We were sitting on our respective benches and waiting for some professor to enter the classroom. We all wanted some new staff so that we could copy. However, our luck was bad. Deshmukh sir entered the classroom. It was all over. Now no one could copy. He handed over the question paper to us along with answer sheets. He warned us if someone was caught, he would be thrown out of the classroom.

I was looking at each question. I knew four questions out of seven. I started writing. Solving sums. I glanced at Swapnil. He had his Xerox under his answer paper. He was writing at rocket speed. It made me more nervous. I glanced at Sameer. He was sitting idle. That reduced my nervousness. I glanced at Riya. She was writing sincerely. That motivated me to write sincerely. I attempted almost 70 marks. I was almost sure to pass. Riya attempted 60 marks. Swapnil, Anup and Sameer attempted almost 80 marks. We were satisfied with our performance based on whatever we had studied.

The second paper was also easy. Applied science. The third paper was computer programming. I had studied it well with basics. Everyone decided to come to my home and study for the night. Anup and Riya did not come. I did not want Riya to come home as my mom was already suspicious about her. Anup's parents did not allow going out at nights during exams. Sameer and Swapnil came home. We had dinner and started studying in my room.

We studied for a while. I taught them basics of programming. I had taught programming to Riya earlier only. Therefore, she was done with this subject. Swapnil made a cup of tea for us.

“Hey aadi, do you have a porn film?” Swapnil asked me.

“Are you crazy? We have our exams in 2 days and you want to play with you dick. Shut up and study.”

Sameer was not interested in all this during exams. He was revising whatever I had taught. A complete book worm. At the end, Swapnil convinced me to show him a porn film. I had a small collection of porn films.

“Wow, she is so hot. Sameer look at her. What a shape she has!” Swapnil was excited.

“I prefer smoke, you watch those nude girls.” Sameer made his point.

“It helps your mind relax. Then I can study.” Swapnil answered him.

I also preferred smoke over nude girls. It's not that we both were impotent or gay. But smoke gave us much more pleasure than watching. This is the age of doing it practically. Not watching them and doing self-service. It's fun when no one is at home and you are studying late nights.

Tea, books, friends, porn films, cigarettes and studying in between.

The question paper was in our hand. It was the worst paper I had ever seen.

I looked at Swapnil's face. He gave me a smile. That made me nervous. I looked at Sameer. He gave me a smile, for a change this time. Nervous breakdown. I looked at Anup. He was also writing. Heart failure. I looked at Riya. She was also writing. Finally, I was dead. 3 hours went in looking at faces of everyone. I had attempted just 50 marks.

“I screwed it up. I will fail. Sure kt. I attempted just 50 marks.” I said.

“Jaan, have you written 50 marks correctly.” Riya seemed to be worried. It was casual though...

“Yes. maybe. Don't know. But I am sure of kt.”

It made me angry. I taught everyone what programming was and what computer language was. And today I was standing outside the exam hall cursing myself...

My mind said *WELCOME TO ENGINEERING. Be ready for the worst.*

The person who taught was about to fail and whoever learnt from that person were smiling and relieved as they had attempted to pass. I still could not believe. This time my heart said...

***Enjoy the 1<sup>st</sup> kt in Engineering.***

I looked at Riya. She did not bother. For the first time I was alone. All alone. She was enjoying herself and never saw my dull face. She behaved differently. What was it? I was not in a frame of mind to think. I ignored it. But I was hurt.

## COOL BREEZE IN DESERT

-  
End of exams. I was worried about Programming. Rest of the papers were fine. All friends including Riya decided to spend the entire day at my home until dinner.

“Bachha are you sure, you want to come home. My Mom will be there in the evening. I hope you will be comfortable.” I asked Riya.

“Ya totally fine. It’s ok.I will leave early. Before your mom comes home.”

“Hmm...ya that would be fine. See you tomorrow then. Come along with Sameer. He knows the address.”

I was nervous, as Riya would be coming home for the first time.Sameer called me the next day.

“Hey Aadi...we are in front of your building. Shall we come up?”

“Sure.”

No one was at home. I was alone.Anup and Riya were coming for the first time. They just took a look at the entire house and we all sat in my bedroom. We had hired a movie cd of Kalyug. We started watching it. I gave them chips to eat.Riya was sitting beside me. Her head on my shoulder. We were teasing each other in between. I was playing with her lips and her eyes.

As the song started...jiya dhadak dhadak... we both lost ourselves in each other’s eyes.Swapnil interrupted us by singing the same song...Riya gave a punch to Swapnil .A loose punch.

“What’s wrong with you Swapnil ” Riya asked.

“Nothing, what did I say? I thought you both need privacy. Then we will go out. You both enjoy yourselves in the bedroom.”

“Swapnil I will kill you.” Riya and Swapnil started running all over the house. I was watching them. Their childish behaviour.They were enjoying themselves. I was thankful to Swapnil for introducing me to Riya.

After lunch, we were just relaxing when Riya showed all of them the ring that I had given her. She was showing it to each of them personally with excitement.Swapnil hugged her, as though he was very happy to see both of us happy. Everyone was happy for both of us...they all gave us another *special Moment in my life*

They all decided to do give us something that we did not know would happen in the future.

*Swapnil was from Riya's side and Sameer and Anup were from my side. They kept both of us in front of each other. Swapnil was beside Riya, Anup and Sameer were beside me. Swapnil removed the ring from Riya's hand and gave it to me and he removed a gold ring from my hand that I wear always and gave it to Riya.*

*"May I know what's happening?" I asked everyone.*

*Riya came close to me and gave a small peck on my lips and said,*

*"Jaan you are dumb. So please be quiet. I understood what they are about to do. You are really dumb." Everybody laughed. I was able to see a spark in Riya's eyes. I was still wondering what was happening.*

*Sameer started shooting with the camera.*

*"Sameer what is happening. Can anyone tell me please?"*

*"Your engagement. Now relax." Swapnil shouted.*

*It made me speechless... These were the friends of a lifetime. They were giving me something, which I had always dreamt of.*

*I went close to Riya. They all started clapping and whistling.*

*I took Riya's hand in mine and put the ring on her finger. They applauded and bowed to us. It was Riya's turn. She also put the ring on my finger. I could see happiness in her eyes. I could almost hear her heart beating. I could sense what she wanted to say but she did not. Maybe it was more beautiful than 14 November.*

*"I love you a lot," she said.*

*"Love you too"*

We went to our bedroom. I could feel the satisfaction in her eyes. I could sense her heart beats saying that we are engaged now. We will always be together. Some things cannot be said but felt. We didn't speak a word. But we conveyed our thoughts to each other. We slept in each other's arms and looked at the ceiling. It seemed to be a white screen where we were watching our future. Our dreams. She kissed the ring and just looked in my eyes. She saw the tears in my eyes. She gave me a cute smile and wiped off the tears. We went out. Everyone was watching the movie.

We got engrossed so much in these moments that we never realised what time it was. The doorbell rang. I saw the time. It was 6pm. It should be mom.

*"Riya. It will be mom. Now what. We will be killed."*

*"Now can't do anything. Go open the door." Riya backed me.*

I went and saw through the keyhole that it was mom. I was afraid. Riya and mom would face each other for the first time. Would they like each other? I could not go against either of them. I could not live without either of them. I opened the door.

“Who has come?” Mom asked as she came in and closed the door.

“My friends. Swapnil, Sameer, Anup and Riya.” My nerves stopped.

“Riya? Where is she? Inside? Where are the others?”

So many questions. Riya was the 1<sup>st</sup> question. Mom came in and looked at all of them. Especially Riya. Riya smiled at her. I could neither smile nor look. Mom did not speak a word and went into the kitchen. She made maggi noodles for all of us. After talking to everyone generally Mom called Riya in the kitchen.

“Riya, be nice. Don’t argue and don’t tell her we are in a relationship. Please.” I told her in a low voice as she went to the kitchen.

I could hear my Mom saying something to Riya. I was trying to hear what they were talking about.

“Aadi...leave it. Riya won’t do anything silly. Trust her.” Everyone tried to reassure me.

“I trust Riya, but I also know my mom. She would ask her everything. I hoped she didn’t get into a panic.”

After about 30 minutes or so Riya came back to the bedroom. I was looking at her and about to ask what had happened, when she said.

“Aadi...your mom is so nice. You are lucky to have such a mom. She told me everything about you. I think she knows we are in a relationship. I will be really happy to marry you and live at your home with your mom.”

“What with my mom? You have to live with me. Not her.” I said jokingly.

“You won’t understand a girl’s feeling Aadi...What it feels to have a good mother in law and a good family after marriage. It means a lot. I will leave my house and come to you. You will have to take care of me.”

“Yes I will. Don’t worry. Now let’s have dinner and think of the results.”

“When will you grow up yaar, Riya is saying such sweet things about your future and you are telling her about results. So unromantic.” Anup said.

“Dude, when the results are declared, romance will evaporate through your ass.” We all laughed and went to have dinner.

Everyone left after dinner. I asked mom what she had to say about my friends. She knew I was asking about Riya. Not everyone. "Sweet, innocent, suits you. But concentrate on studies. If you have a career you can have a good life." I was glad that my mom liked Riya... *Our relationship went one more step ahead. Was it too fast?*

## RESULTS DECLARED...

For the first time results of 1<sup>st</sup> year were declared so early. It was not that early but still... We called each other and went to the college at 7pm... The result was displayed near the library. There was a lot of rush there. We could not even see the board. Riya was out with her parents. She could not come. We decided to check the result after sometime. We went to tapri. All of us were tensed.

"What do you think your result will be." I asked both my friends.

Swapnil expected one kt and Anup expected two. Sameer expected three. I was expecting one. It was a tough time. We were worried.

After smoking, we went to the college. Rush was less. We went near the board and started searching for our names.

Swapnil was the first to see his name. 1 kt. As expected.

Sameer was the next to know that he got 4 kt. 1 more than expected. I was still looking for my name. Sameer's result made me nervous.

Next was Riya... 2 kt... this almost gave me an attack. I looked at the subjects she had kt in... BEE AND MECHANICS.

Next was my turn. I got 1 kt. CP.

Anup got 2 kt.

Everyone cleared in CP. It made me feel low. Riya was also not there. I wanted to tell Riya about the result. But she was with her family. 2 kt and how will her family react I did not know. I did not tell her. I called my mom to tell her about my result. She was not happy. But she did not say anything. 1 kt was fine when a few months earlier I never wanted to do engineering. Mom asked me about Riya's result. I did not say anything and I kept the phone.

I called Riya. She was with her family. I did not tell her my result or hers.

I messaged her.

*Results out. I got 1 kt. Sameer got 4. Swapnil got 1. Anup got 2. And you got 2. BEE AND MECHANICS.*

There was no reply. I was worried. Was she upset? I again messaged her.

*What happened? Reply. Are you ok? Did you tell your parents about your result?*

This time also no reply. I was tensed. I called her. She did not pick up. That made me more tense.

I went home. Still there was no reply. I went to sleep. When I got up in the morning, I saw her message.

*Sorry, I was busy with family. Could not reply to you. Sorry bachha. I Did not want to hurt you. I know you are angry. Sorry again. Anyways congrats for result. Call me when you get up.*

I immediately called her. She picked up the phone. I bursted out.

“What the hell is this? Am I mad to call you for so long yesterday? I called you for 20 times and so many messages. Where were you? Were you really with your parents? Or were you dating someone?”

“Aadi...This is rude. You know I was with my family. I had told you. They were around me all the time. How could I talk to you in front of them?”

“I don't care. You should have. Get lost. I do not want to talk to you. Hate you.”

“Fine. Do as you feel like. Bye. You are rude. Hate you too.”

I was really disturbed by the result and Riya was behaving very badly. I knew I should not have shouted at her but I had lost my temper. For the first time we had a fight. I felt bad. I cried. However, it was her mistake. She could have messaged me once. I did not call her back.

Let her go to hell. Calling her for almost 10 hours....Even messaging. It was too much.

I did not talk with Riya for one whole day. I was disturbed about my result. I had 29 marks in cp. Somehow I wanted to clear it. I had heard that there are 4 to 5 professors who clear the paper in revaluation charging 10,000rs. I was ready to do that. Swapnil and I went to meet a few of the professors. Nobody responded until we found one professor. He was asking 20,000rs. It was not a small amount. He told us to give the paper for revaluation. He did not look trust worthy. I desperately wanted to clear the kt in any possible way. I tried all the ways. If Riya had been with me my confidence would have been different. Even she was not with me. I was alone.

I took the initiative and called her. She picked up the phone. As soon as she picked the phone, she started crying badly. It hurt me. I realised I was wrong. I said sorry to her. She cried more.

“Jaan I am sorry please say something. Stop crying bachha. Please. Forgive me”

“Why didn't you call me for so long. I was waiting for your call from the time I kept down the phone the last time. You don't care about me. You have started taking me for granted. Why Aadi... why? I had told you everything that day. I needed you the most when my parents shouted at me for the result. You were not there. Hate you Aadi...” she cried and cried.

“I said sorry. Let's go to Bandra tomorrow. Mount Merry.”

“Ok fine. Dare you fight with me again. Please. I can't handle this. Love you. sorry.” she was still crying a bit.

“Don’t be sorry. It was my mistake and I will not repeat it. See you tomorrow.”

We met the next day. She was still upset for whatever had happened. I knew how to make her happy. I had a surprise for her. It was wrapped.

“Are you still angry?” I asked her when we sat in the rickshaw at Bandra.

“Ya somewhat.” She replied looking at me with swollen eyes. She had indeed cried a lot.

“I know how to make you smile, don’t I?” I smiled kissing her forehead.

“What? Dont tell me you have a surprise for me?” she looked at me waiting for my reply.

“Hmm...kind of...” I opened the zip of my bag, took out the wrapped gift and gave it to her. She kissed me so hard that there was a big love bite on my neck. She started opening it.

It was a t-shirt, which had a smiley on it saying sorry. She hugged me tightly as hard as she could. It is such a wonderful feeling when your love kisses you and hugs you after a fight. Almost 2 days we did not talk to each other. We did not say love you to each other. In addition, here we were after 2 days, Kissing and hugging each other, crying in each other’s arms. It was an emotional feeling. We both loved each other so much that we could hardly live without each other.

I told her about revaluation. I told her that I had a talk with a professor who would clear my paper. Oh, god...and it started again. I really said what I never meant. I wanted to say our paper but I said my paper. And it began again.

“Good. Very good. You did not feel like telling me also in these two days. Superb. Now you are becoming selfish. You are changing. Tell me one thing that you did without asking me in these 3 months. Did you? And you took such a big decision without even asking me. Fine we were not talking to each other but did you forget that even I had kt. You could have told him about me also. You have changed Aadi...”

“I didn’t mean it. Why would I tell him just about myself? I have not decided yet. Why are you over reacting? Please stop fighting. For God’s sake.”

Long silence...

She ignored it. She did not want to waste time in fighting. I kissed her. We shared a smile. We went to Mount Merry, Bandstand, kissing, hugging, fondling each other looking at the waves of the sea, but it was not a smile, which we always used to share. Some disputes had begun. Small things but big fights. I never wanted it. I always felt it’s too fast.

## **EVEN SEMESTER INDEED**

End of vacations and beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. Getting back to college was not exciting at all. Riya had reached college before me. I told her to collect the mark sheets for both of us. When I reached the college, I met Riya in the quadrangle. We both went near the notice board to note down the subjects and timetable.

1. **CP 2**
2. **ENGG DRAWING**
3. **APPLIED SCIENCES 2**
4. **MATHS 2**
5. **COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Subjects were not that difficult as in first semester. Of course maths 2 and cp2 were a bit tricky. However, rest 3 subjects were manageable. We went for our first lecture of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. It was an enchanting feeling again to sit for lectures and keep staring at Riya. Whenever I used to give her a missed call she used to look back and give me a naughty smile. We fought but we still loved each other. From the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, love was in the air.

We were having lunch in our classroom when I went out to attend a call. I was approached by two boys when I was on call.

“Do you know that girl?” They both asked me.

“Who are you talking of” we peeped into the class. I looked at the girl they pointed. I knew they were pointing towards Riya. They were asking me her name. I tried to avoid the topic. I told them some different name.

“No, that’s not her name. Her name is something else” they stared at me. However, I did not reveal the name. They left, as I did not show any interest in talking to them. I went into the classroom and sat with Riya. Swapnil and everyone were on last bench. I was talking to Riya when I saw them again standing outside back door. They were calling me. I ignored them. I continued talking to Riya. Riya was telling me about her brother’s studies and we were talking about the engagement at my home. We were having a nice time.

Suddenly they entered the classroom and came near me. They came close to both of us. I wanted to keep Riya away from them. I thought they would ask her name or something else. But nothing like that happened. They came closer to me and asked me

“What’s your problem” before I could reply they slapped me hard and ran away. I was shocked. It happened in a fraction of a second and they ran away. Everyone looked at me. Sameer and Swapnil came running towards me. They were also shocked. Riya just kept looking at me. She did not know what exactly had happened. Who were they and why did they hit me?

“What happened Aadi? Who were they? Did you say anything?” Sameer asked me

“I really don’t know. They came sometime back when I went outside to attend a call. They asked me about Riya and they went. I ignored them at that time. This time they came and before I could say anything, they just slapped me. I would have grabbed him and hit him if he had waited. But he ran away.”

“What the fuck. Someone will come and hit you like this. Let me look into this matter.” Sameer said.

“Even I don’t know. I don’t even know their names.” I was frustrated.

We went out of the classroom to search them. Still we could not find them. We came into the classroom and attended the lecture. Everyone was disturbed. Riya was looking at me continuously. She was more disturbed than I was. She came to know that they had hit me because of her. She had some guilt in her eyes. I messaged her in the lecture to concentrate on the lecture and not to worry.

Sameer and I decided to take some action. The next day we came to know that the person who had hit me was called Rishi. He was the son of some local minister near the college. We did not care. We had arranged for a group of boys to hit him back. Riya was unaware of this. I kept her away from this. I did not want her to get into trouble. We waited outside the college gate for him to come. After some time we saw him coming. As he knew me I went away from the group. Sameer called him and asked him what had happened the previous day in college. He did not say anything regarding me. I went near them. He saw me and remembered.

“Bastard what did you think you would hit me and run away. I won’t do anything. I do not care who you are. Dare you look at Riya again and ask about her I will kill you.” I raised my voice as much as I could.

Sameer came forward and slapped him. He also counter attacked us. But we were in a group of 8. He was alone. We hit him badly. He fell down on the road. We were still hitting him. Sameer stopped everyone. As he got up I slapped him and said

“Warning you.”

He said sorry immediately and admitted that he was not any minister’s son. He was just showing off in front of first year students. He also told he wouldn’t look at Riya ever and no one in college would trouble us.

This made us feel proud. I did not utter a word about this to Riya. She kept on calling me when I was outside the college. I said my phone was on silent and apologised.

Riya was still worried about that incident. I consoled her that everything was normal and he wouldn't trouble us again. She smiled and we went for practicals. I gave her a naughty smile as we reached the Practical hall.

College function was about to begin in 2 days. We were all excited. I was happy, as there would be no lectures most of the time. Riya and I decided to attend on a few days like those on which there were traditional functions and the sari day. For the rest of the time we would spend some time together hanging out somewhere.

**BLACK DAY.** We were all supposed to wear anything in black. I told Riya that black really blathered her complexion. She should wear something different. I want my jaan to look the best. She said she would shock me by her looks. I was eagerly waiting for her near the college gate. I called her and she was on the way to the college. As she approached me, I was stunned.

She was wearing a gorgeous dress with a high neck. It was short, barely up to knees. She was looking an absolute beauty. We went into the college and met everyone. They had decided to go to the restaurant. We moved away from the college and went to a restaurant.

We had pavbhaaji as usual. It was the time to enjoy and have fun.

Each day had something in it. The saree day came next. It also included competition to choose Miss Fresher. The girl who got the maximum roses would be Miss Fresher. Riya was looking absolutely gorgeous in her blue saree. And her blouse was backless. I loved it. We did not wait in college. I wanted to spend time alone with her. We went to Grant Lane, Vashi.

“You are looking so good. I can't believe I am so lucky.” I said,

“You are looking no less sexy in your sherwaani. Love you too.” She said.

We spent some time in Grant Lane and came back to college. When I reached college I saw that Sameer was giving a rose to some girl and she rejected it. He tried hard to convince her. I felt sad for Sameer.

The day for which we had waited for a long time. The annual day. The last day of celebrations. We had a fashion show, dances and dj night too. There was a competition of eating chillies on stage. Maximum chillies. Everyone was forcing me to participate. I was going crazy. Everyone was forcing me a lot. I agreed to participate.

I went on the stage. There was another boy with me. The anchor announced.

*The two of you have to eat as many chillies as possible in 1 minute. The one who wins will get 1000rs. Your time start now.*

I started eating. I was getting the burning sensation. What the fuck. I wanted to quit. I wanted to use the washroom. I could not handle the pressure. The match was over. I lost. There was no chance for me to win.

“Please let me go to the washroom” I said when everyone came near me.

My mouth was burning. I drank a full bottle of water and went to the washroom. Releasing a pressure when you need it most is really awesome. I felt relaxed.

“You idiots. I am screwed. Give me more water” I said to everyone.

“ Drink my bachha. I can feel what you are going through. I am loving it.” Riya was laughing.

I was not able to laugh. The feel of burning from both ends was really sucking my heart out. But it was fun. We really enjoyed the day. Riya was with me. My friends were with me. We had lots of fun. Today I felt I was complete. I had Good friends, my love, college life which everyone wants and moments that everyone wants in his or her life.

## **MEETING RIYA’S FRIENDS**

Neha and Riya were together from school days. Same school as Riya shifted to Navi Mumbai in SSC and now the same college. Since they were in different sections, they did not interact much though. During the function, they got in touch when they came to know that they were in same branch. Riya told me, they were good friends during school days, then Neha shifted to Hyderabad for 2 years, and now she was back in Mumbai in same college.

Once when we were walking near the bus depot we saw her. Riya called her and introduced us.

“Hey, meet him he is Aditya. We are from same division and we both love each other very much.”

“Hi, Aditya, beware of her. Don’t regret later.” She said it humorously.

“Don’t worry, I won’t regret ever. And the day I will regret I will call you and tell you that you were right.” Even I continued in the same mood.

Riya looked at me through corner of her eye. I said sorry to her. We all laughed.

“What is up with you? What about your relationship with Amit.” Riya asked her.

“Oh, you still remember him. Great. I thought you must have erased it from your memory.”

“Crazy. How can I. He used to love you so much. How is he now? Does he look the same? I haven't seen him for the last 3 years.”

“Lucky you. I am waiting for him. He is coming in 5 minutes.”

From their conversation, I came to know that he also lived in the same locality where Riya and Neha lived. He used to love Neha during school days and their relation began after school but as Neha moved to Hyderabad, they lost touch. Now they were both together. True love I thought. After living separately for 2 years, they are together now. I admired him.

“There he is.” Neha pointed at him. He was too far. We could see him clearly. As he came close, I observed him carefully.

He was tall. Taller than me. Maybe 5.10 feet. He was dark. Muscled body. A very odd shirt though. Pink color. Pink on dark skin looked funny. I thought he looked a gay. He was wearing shades on his eyes. Black colour again. Low waist jeans that was torn. Shoes looked like Nike I suppose. He had a good built and height.

“This is Amit. My Amit.” She grabbed his waist and leaned on him

“I cannot believe, Riya is it you? Oh my God. Where were you for so many years? After a long time I am seeing you.” Amit looked surprised seeing her.

What did he mean by where were you for so many years. My heart was shouting at him. She is mine. Can you listen, Oh gay, she is mine. Why are you observing her.

“My goodness. You have changed a lot. Really. When I saw you last time some 3 years back you were so thin. You have put on weight. Nice muscles. Good.”

I looked at my muscles. I felt insecure as I did not have any. Do muscles mean everything? Why does any one need muscles? If you are smart looking, intelligent and have power in your rod, Why should you need muscles. Moreover if you can understand what your girl wants from you why need muscles? My heart shouted again. Hey all of you. Even I am here. Can you all see me?

“Meet him. This is Aadi...my jaan. My everything. I love him beyond limits.” Riya finally introduced me.

I said an awkward hi to him. His reaction was no different. It was the same as mine. Maybe he was thinking why Riya loved me. I wanted to tell him because I was not gay like him wearing pink t-shirts all over. However, I did not speak. Preferred not to talk to gays.

What was happening to me? Why I was getting so frustrated? I told myself to calm down. Riya was mine. Maybe I felt insecure as she had appreciated someone in front of me. But somewhere I thought she said I am her jaan. I felt better.

“Where are two of you going? We are going to have something in the restaurant. Do you want to join?” Riya asked them.

I looked at Riya in anger. Why do you want the two of them? Let them go their way. We will go by our way. I want privacy. I do not want your stupid conversation with both of them. I was looking like a stranger to the three of them. All school friends reunited. I hated it the most.

“Fine. We will join you.” Neha and Amit agreed.

Superb. Excellent. Bloody idiots don’t you understand Riya asked you just for formality. Who is going to the pay bill. I will not pay a single penny. Let Amit pay it. He wanted to join us. What the hell? Riya looked at me. She knew what I was thinking. She gave me sweet smile. She also did not want them to come. However, fools will be fools. Who can change them?

We ordered some snacks.

“Amit doesn’t have oily food. He is health conscious.” Neha added.

Oh really, so what can we do. Keep your Amit in your showcase as a showpiece. A HEALTH CONSCIOUS MAN. I purposely called the waiter.

“Bring me paavbhaaji.” I said to him

“Anything more sir.” He added.

“Yes, put some more oil. I like oily food.” They all stared at me. Riya pinched my hand under the table. I looked at her and gave a smile. She knew what I was trying to show.

They were chatting about school days. I was quiet. What was I supposed to say. Again, Neha started with my Amit stuff...

“We have to leave early. Its time for my Amit’s gym.” She played with his short hair.

I was irritated. I was losing control. Riya was stopping me all the time. She made me calm down. My Amit, my Amit and my Amit. I thought he was her pussycat or some pet. Yukksss.....it was disgusting. We left after some time.

“Jaan, I hate this. Why did they have to join us? You know I don’t like all this.” I said angrily.

She just had one answer always. A KISS. She kissed me on the road. Small kiss. But it was enough for me to calm down. But I hate him.

## THE DAY OF SURPRISES

26<sup>th</sup> February. Riya and I had decided to spend the entire day together. It was my 1<sup>st</sup> birthday with her. We had decided to go to Grant Lane. We met each other by 11am at Aerol Depot. We went by bus. She had two surprises for me. I was excited, I wanted this day to be special.

As the Bus left Aerol Depot, she gave me a white rose. Such a sweet moment it was. I was really touched by this moment.

“Why white rose jaan?” I asked her.

“We had fought in last few days therefore a white rose to say that I really don’t want fights in future.” She kissed my hand.

“You are a sweetheart. You are an angel” I was really touched by her first gift. Such a special way to express her love...

As 15 minutes passed she was again taking out something from her bag. I watched her carefully. She was looking at me and smiling.

“Now what? How many gifts have you brought?” I was excited.

“Bachha, keep patience. Close your eyes,” she closed my eyes.

She told me to open it and as I opened them, this time there was a dark pink rose. This was more touching. She was really making my day beautiful.

“What is this for?” I did not know the significance of dark pink rose.

“This is to thank you. Thank you for whatever you did for me. Whatever you are doing for me and for being with me.”

This is out of the world. Something, which was unbelievable. A dream.

“Thanks.” I was speechless. I kissed her on her cheeks.

We reached Grant Lane. As we sat in the Auto, she again put her hands in the bag. Now what? Is this a dream?

“Hey, you said you had just 2 gifts. Now what is it?” I was almost dancing.

She removed it from bag. It was a lavender colour rose. This was a dream for sure. Third rose, in the last 40 min. Why did she love me so much?

“Jaan what has happened to you? When did you do all this planning?”

“You just enjoy your birthday. I will make it special.”

“You have already made it jaan.”

“What does this color mean?”

“This means love at first sight. I loved you from the day I first saw you. From the day, our eyes met when I entered the classroom. I started loving you from that day. I wanted you to be mine from that moment itself. Love you.”

We got down from the auto and there she was again in front of me with a yellow rose. I would have cried now. I just could not believe my eyes.

I just walked close to her. We hugged each other so tightly that every one passing by looked at us. We did not care. This time I knew the meaning of the yellow rose. It means she cared for me. She did care for me. A lot. This was the best hug she gave me till now.

We entered the garden. We sat on a bench. I was just looking into her eyes. They looked special today. I wanted to forget each small fight I had with her. I wanted to forget all those times I had doubted her. I kissed her. For the first time while kissing her, I closed my eyes. This time she did not close her eyes. As I opened my eyes, I saw a red rose on my bag, which was kept beside me.

She said

*I love you a lot.*

*I love you more than anyone can. There may be many girls who will love you in future. However, trust me you will never get a girl who can do all these things for you. And I am not doing these to show you that I am the best but I am doing this because you are the best. You are the best possible thing that happened in my life. My love is increasing day by day. Let's get married.*

*A sweet smile and she continued*

*I know we can't. However, I want to be with you for 24hours. From the time you wake up until the time you sleep.*

I grabbed her. I squeezed her. I couldn't control myself but I bit her on her lips. She shouted. She loved it. It was wild. But she made it wild.. She was mine. She was just mine. No one could have her in their life now.

We were both lost in our world. I went to order some food. I ordered veg chilly and told him to bring it to the garden. I walked towards the bench. As I reached the bench, I saw she had kept a cake on the bench with a candle on it. She had written '*To my sweet cute bachhu.*' This time I could not stop my tears. She stood up and came close to me. She gave me the warmest hug. Each moment was special. We sat and I cut my birthday cake. I forcibly put the 1<sup>st</sup> piece into her mouth. She was not able to speak. She did the same with me. It was a small cake. We shared it. After eating the cake and veg chilly I slept with my head on her lap. I was looking into her eyes and she was weeping. I could not stop my tears.

I saw the time. It was 4pm. We had slept for almost 2 hours. I checked my belongings. They were all right. Her head was on my chest. I did not get up. I wanted to see her sleeping. On the previous occasion she had not woken me up. This was my turn. After 15 min, she woke up. She gave me a morning smile that we usually give when we wake up in the morning.

“Jaan, its 4:30. We slept for 2 hours. Thank god our belongings are safe.” I got up saying this.

“Oh my god. What are you saying? Let it be. We have the entire day. Let me show you something.”

One more? I would have fall down on the grass. So many gifts. So many surprises.

“Bachha enough. I am already full of gifts. Why do you love me so much?”

“Because you are special.” She took out a plastic bag saying this.

It was t-shirt. Green t-shirt from Pepe Jeans. It would be costly. From where did she get so much money? However, it was special.

This time I hade no words to explain what I felt.

Now it was my turn. It was my turn to give her something. She had done so much for me. Now I would. Even I had a few things in mind for evening.

We left Grant Lane at about 5 pm and went to a restaurant. I had searched for that restaurant earlier on internet. I had informed the manager about all the arrangements.

We reached the destination. Neel Restaurant. I told her to wait. I went inside and confirmed the arrangements with the manager.

I called Riya inside. It was dark. It had a long passage. There were two tables in it that gave complete privacy to couples. It was surrounded by ply from three sides and it had a round table inside with two chairs with white covers. It had a fancy candle on it and rose petals beside it. There were few people in restaurants. However, we had privacy. It was a candle light dinner.

This time tears were transferred to her eyes. She loved it. She pinched my hand so tight that it hurt me. I came to know that she wanted to kiss me hard but could not due to people around us. We sat at the table. I told him to play our special song...

“tujhe dekh dekh sona.....”

As the song started, she could not stop herself. She kissed me.

“Loved it? I know this is nothing compared to what you did today for me.” I said

“No sweetheart, you are the best. If I combine all the gifts that I gave you they were nothing in front of what you did right now.”

Still my surprises were not over yet. 1 surprise remains. I smiled

I did not tell her what that was. We left the restaurant after having food and reached Grant Lane station. This was something, which could go against me. However, I wanted to take risk. I wanted to ask something from someone.

As train reached Aerol, Riya was about to get down. I stopped her and said nothing to her. She told me she was getting late. Still I told her to come with me. We reached my area and then to my apartment and then to my house. Mom opened the door. She was surprised to see Riya and me together. Mom was alone at home. We sat in the hall. Mom brought us a glass of water.

I said...

*Mom I love Riya. I love her very much. We love each other very much.*

My Mom was shocked. Riya was almost dead. This was the last surprise of the day.

## NERVOUS MEETING

More than 30 min and still there was silence in the room. I was sitting on a sofa. Mom and Riya were sitting on another couch. Mom looked at me sometimes and sometimes at Riya. I was trying to look into my Mom's mind. She did not allow me to do so. I broke the silence.

“Mom say something. Please. I really love her.”

My Mom was always frank with me. We shared a relationship, which was not less than friendship. I wanted her to support me. I wanted her to accept Riya as my girlfriend.

“Is this your age? Do you even know what love is? Bunking colleges and roaming around, watching movies, hands in hand... do you think this is love?”

“Mom I don’t know what it is. However, I like her. I want her to be with me.”

“Do whatever you want. What can I say?” she was upset.

Riya pointed at me to go inside. Without saying anything, I went. Maybe Mom would talk frankly about me with Riya or it can be other way too. I had a firm belief in Riya.

“When did it start? What exactly happened? And how far have you gone in your relationship? My Mom asked Riya. I was behind the door itself. I could hear everything.

“Aunty I know I may be wrong. You have seen more life than we have. Nevertheless, we seriously like each other. I don’t know when it happened but we are in a relationship from November. He helped me in my studies; he also helped me in each possible way. He is very nice towards me. I do not know if this is love or not. But ...”

“From November you are both together. I had asked Aditya when that autorickshaw driver had come. I knew from that day only. I never told Aditya what the driver said about you both. He told me everything what you were doing in rickshaw. I did not tell this to Aditya, as I wanted him to concentrate on his exams. What are you both up to? First learn to earn money then you can do all these things.”

“Aunty I know this is not the age for all this. Now if you try to separate both of us it would affect our semester. Aunty do not worry, I will take care of him. Seriously, I will not let him sidetrack from studies. Please trust me.”

My Mom smiled. I wanted to hug her. She is the first one who wakes me up everyday, with a lovely heart and a friendly soul... even today she is the first one to accept my Riya as she is. I love my Mom. I love Riya too...

I went outside and could not hide my happiness.

“So, heard everything behind the door. I am your Mom. So don’t act foolish in front of me.” She hugged me and was happy to see me happy.

She still told me that education was the first priority and rest everything should be left aside while studying. I accepted whatever she said. After all, she accepted my Riya.

Riya was very happy. We chatted for sometime and then Riya left for home. I went near the gate to leave her. This time seeing her going home was something different. Something, which brought a sense of security in me.

No sooner than we had seen each other, we liked each other. No sooner, we liked each other we knew each other. No sooner, we knew each other we respected each other's behaviour. No sooner we respected we appreciated each other. Then we loved each other. No sooner we loved each other deeply we were in front of my Mom. And took our relationship one more step ahead.

I dreamt of getting engaged to her. A hall filled with family and friends. When she will ask me what kind of wedding I wished for...I would answer *nothing special. However, the one which would make me your husband.*

“Mom do you really love Riya?” I wanted to know the truth.

“Yes I love her. I think she is the only girl who can improve you. However, as I said studies are the first priority. Anyways she is beautiful. Sweet and we go along well with each other”

This answer made my birthday special. I got the gift from my parents. *Riya. MY JAAN*

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## MOMENTS TO REMEMBER

I reached college. The next day, Riya had messaged me in morning that she would be late due to some household work. The second lecture began. Riya was still at home. She messaged me to leave the college and come to her home. I was surprised. I knew there was no one at her house this morning. As the lecture got over, I left the college and reached her gate.

“Hey, shall I come inside. What if watchman asks me something?” I called her.

“No problem, he won't ask anything. Come inside.” She said and kept the phone.

I went in. She opened the door. I entered her house to see Amit and Neha. Not again. I said to myself. They were eating chips. Now wasn't that oily? Fools will be fool. I went straight into the kitchen and Riya joined me.

“What is this? What are these two doing here?”

“They are here to celebrate your birthday. I had called Neha in the morning and told her what had happened yesterday. So she said even we both want to celebrate his birthday.”

“That's ridiculous. It was my birthday. Why do these two want to celebrate it? And if they want to celebrate who the hell is giving them a party?”

“Please Aadi... they are nice. Let's go outside.” Riya pulled me outside.

They wished me belated happy birthday. They looked nice together as a couple. However, they were funny. Maybe I thought it because the first impression was bad. I was insecure in their company. I felt left out.

Riya was in the kitchen preparing something to eat. Neha also went inside and this irritated made me more. I was alone sitting with Amit. We were watching TV. I did not talk to him. He did not try to talk to me. We did not even look at each other. He was kind of reserved and so was I... Moreover I hated him. I wanted to be alone at my girlfriend's house and there he was sitting in front of me in her house. Instead of spending some quality time with my girlfriend, I was with her school friend and his girlfriend.

He asked me for water. I looked at him but did not oblige. I wanted to tell him that this was my Riya's house. I could do anything I wanted.

Riya and Neha came out as they were almost ready with food. Riya was making the food while Neha was helping her.

"I hope you are having a nice time together." Riya said it to me.

With a gay... I said it in my mind. The biggest irritant was that he carried Nokia cell phone. N series. Pink in colour. Oh my God. This was extreme...

Riya came and sat beside me. I grabbed her waist and she rested against me. Amit and Neha were discussing something, which we could not hear. I did not care to.

"So how is your love life?" Amit asked Riya with a big smile on his face. I hated that smile.

"Can't you see, we are madly in love with each other. We cannot live without each other. I love him a lot." Her answer brought a big smile on my face.

"What about you?" I asked Neha. Just to show off if he could talk to my girlfriend I could do the same.

"Even we both love each other. It has been a difficult journey for us. Still we are together. This gives us satisfaction" Neha answered

"Ya even I love her a lot." Amit added.

For the first time I was not angry at his answer. Not even frustrated. I was observing their eyes. Maybe they loved each other seriously.

We decided to play cards. Teen patti.

I shuffled the cards and gave three cards to each. I looked at my cards.

I had three cards of spades.

We put in the minimum bet of 10rs. For the first round, no body packed their cards. The second round began. Riya packed and so did Neha. Now Amit and I were left. This made me more enthusiastic.

“I increase the bet by 20rs” I said.

“Me too.” Amit added.

“I still increase by 20rs. Amit think over it. You will lose.” I gave him a harsh look.

“Don’t worry. Let’s check it out. I call for a show.” He said.

“I showed him my cards one by one.

“I told you that you will lose. Didnt I? See your face.”

He showed me the first card. It was queen of hearts. I looked at my queen of hearts. I wished I had that card. I could have afforded to lose for that card. He showed me the second card. It was queen of spade. Two queens. This made me nervous. It was not the question of a few rupees but the question of who was superior between the two of us.

He showed the third card too. It was a joker. I lost.

“Buddy, don’t be over confident. I never told you anything. Still I won. This is a real game. You have to win without saying a word. This gives satisfaction.” He got up and stretched himself.

I hated him seriously. I wanted to win. I ignored him. It was just a game. However, I did not forget what he had said.

*Buddy, don't be over confident. I never told you anything. Still I won. This is a real game. You have to win without saying a word. This gives satisfaction.*

It was time to have lunch. Both the girls went inside to arrange things leaving Amit and me. This time I took the initiative and talked to him

“So, how is college going on?” I kept cards neatly while saying this.

“Perfect. What about you.”

“Nothing special. So you love Neha or this is just for sex.” I thought he would hit me. It was not the question to be asked. However, I did.

He laughed and said, “Ya I really love her. It’s a long time now.” He laughed more.

I got my answer. I came to know what I wanted to. I realized his intentions from the day I saw him.

“Your parents know about it?” I was eager to hear his response.

“Not yet. But let’s see. Our parents are strict. Neha’s dad will kill her if he gets to know all these things. They are against all these affairs and all.”

I agreed to what he said. I have seen parents like that. Not everybody is as lucky as I am. I was observing him carefully. There was something going on in his mind. I wanted to read it. One thing was sure. This man couldn’t love anyone. The way he laughed was weird. If someone had asked me that question, I would not have spared him. Still I ignored, as not every person is the same.

Riya came out with the food. Neha followed her with the dishes. I was waiting to taste it as I was going to have fish made by Riya for the first time.

Riya served all of us. She was looking so sweet when she was serving. A perfect wife. She sat beside me. I was looking at her. She gave a smile. She understood why I was looking at her. She played with my hair...

we started eating. It was delicious. I have no words to explain the taste of it. Fabulous. Riya started feeding me and I did the same.

“Liked it?” she knew I liked it but she always liked to hear it.

“Obviously. I can’t express how it is. But awesome. You are a great cook.

She was changing the channels of TV when suddenly Pogo channel appeared. I told her to stop and we watched Pogo.

“Are you a kid? My brother also keeps on watching this.” Riya laughed.

“Don’t you call me bachha. Then I am a kid. I love this show. I love Bob the builder.” I smiled like a kid.

“Idiot. Wait I will bring rice for you.” She went in to the kitchen.

“Hey Aadi... why do you like this show?” Amit asked me.

I did not answer him. Just shook my head. He must be watching shaktimaan or he-man maybe. Bloody muscles... or I thought Amit– the builder. Funny. Riya served me rice. It was tastier. She never let me eat rice with my own hands. She used to feed me with a spoon. I used to eat more rice because of this. I loved watching her eyes when she fed me. They looked beautiful.

Riya fulfilled all the needs as she guided me to the right path, wiped away my tears and tried to make me feel happy when I was feeling low and depressed. I always felt like telling her that I loved her much more than I had ever found a way to convey the same to her.

After having lunch, we went to the bedroom. I wanted to talk to Riya. I wanted to spend some quality time with her. Amit and Neha were in hall. We closed the door of the bedroom and sat on the bed.

“Jaan, you are a very nice cook. I loved it.” I appreciated her as she kept her head on my lap and lay on the bed.

“Thanks. I feared that you would not like. Now I am happy that you loved it. Now I can marry you.”

“Marry? So early?” I asked.

“Yes. I want to.” She was serious.

But it was too early....

She started showing me her photographs and some soft toys. Her dresses and her skirts. I loved her one mini skirt. It was grey and covered only half her thighs. It was plain with some black design on it. I told her to wear that one. She refused as the other two were sitting outside.

“Change here. I will close my eyes. I won’t see you changing” I closed my eyes.

“Dare you open your eyes” she was changing I think. My eyes were closed.

“I won’t open my eyes but I will open your skirt for sure.” I flirted. I was best at it. Atleast I thought so.

“Shut up Aadi... opens your eyes.” She said and gave me a killer look.

I was almost dead looking at her. My heart skipped a beat. It always happened. She had changed her top too. It was her new top. My weakness. Red. I could not resist myself. I pushed her on the bed.

As we lay facing each other, listening to, Mariah Carey locked my eyes with hers, leaned, and said, "You are awesome."

"Your Body Is a Wonderland".

She was playing with my bare chest. This was the first time we were together on a bed. It was the hottest Moment. The first time I got naked with Riya, somewhere between peeling off my shirt and unzipping my jeans, she whispered, "You're all soft “

Her voice was steady and soft, her lips close to my ear. Her words were an endearing mix of tender. at the same moment my hands were securely wrapped around her back and my chest was pressed against hers. Later, as we lay facing each other, listening to John Mayer, she locked her eyes with mine, leaned in, and said, "You do good work."

“you want me to take you on air” I became more naughty.

"You make me feel so good" she sighed...

“The next time I am going to take you on a hobby horse” I hugged her and we lay beside each other.

For the first time I had a nice sleep. She looked fresh after making love. Her face glittered. One more day that we both can never forget. We went outside and I decided to leave.

All three of us left the house. I was tired and did not want to travel by train. I decided to go by autorickshaw. I was still in Riya’s arms or feeling that way. Her perfume, her body, her expressions all haunted me. We reached heights that made us cling to each other, in fear of losing that ecstasy. After loving and pleasuring each other in the most intimate ways; after physically, mentally and emotionally becoming a single living breathing soul, I did not want to let go. I did not have any desire to break that bond and if we could fall asleep with our arms wrapped around each other and our bodies close we would be happy.

I was about to reach home when Riya called me. I picked up the call.

“Missing me so much that within 20 minutes you called me. Love you,” I said as I picked up the call.

“Jaan, listen to me 1<sup>st</sup>. Please. It’s urgent. Please come back”

“What happened? Something serious? Are you okay?” I said in tense voice.

“Yes, its serious Amit has met with an accident. He fell from his bike. He left Neha home and while he was going home, he fell down. His bike slipped.Neha had called me just now. Please come back. We are taking him to hospital. We are on the way.Sector 20.”

“Ok fine.Dont worry. I am coming.” I hated him but still for Riya and Neha’s sake, I had to go.

I told the driver to stop. I paid him, got down, and moved to Aerol again. I reached the hospital.Riya and Neha were standing there.Neha was crying. I tried to console her. He was not serious. He had a minor fracture in his hand. I went inside to see him.

“Aadi, how come you are here?” he was surprised seeing me in hospital. Maybe he knew that I hated him.

“Riya called me up. I came to see if anything is serious. However, you seem to be fine. Just a minor crack. Right?” I had a look at his hand.

“Ya kind of. Maybe 20 days to recover. I was driving slowly but ...”

“Its ok.Take rest. And be careful. Shall I leave? I will come again tomorrow. I am late now. I have to reach home.” I left as I said it.

Riya was waiting outside. I calmed her down. She was worried. I told them to go home as his parents were also there. It didn’t look nice. All of us left the hospital. I dropped them and went home. I was already late. I told Mom what had happened. I just said my friend had met with an accident. My college friend. If I had told her everything, she would have asked more questions.

Next morning I went to the hospital. Amit’s didi was there with him. I asked him how he was feeling. He smiled.

“When are you getting discharged?” I asked him.

“Maybe tomorrow. The doctor will examine me today and then he will take the decision. I hope he discharges me today. There are no sexy nurses here.” We all laughed.

Amit’s didi told me to wait and she went home.

“Aadi you are very lucky.” he seemed upset.

“Why. Any problem? What’s the matter?”

“You have such a nice girlfriend who takes care of you. You are a lucky boy.” He added.

When I asked him the details, he started telling me about his love life.

*Neha has not called me since night. It is already 11am.Is this the way to behave? She doesn't care how I feel, what I want. She could have slept late yesterday. However, she was sleepy and she slept around 12am itself. It's not the case with you. I am sure if something had happened to you, the case would*

*have been different. I seriously love Neha but she does not return it.. I understand her family is strict but still these things can be worked out. The way she gets close to all the boys irritates me. Whenever I call her in lunchtime, she says she is busy with friends. I wait outside your college for hours and she still does not bunk a lecture. Still I am with her, as I love her. But you are lucky.*

Riya is a sweetheart. She can't do all these things. She would have taken one more bed next to me just to be with me in the hospital. However, as I said, not everybody could have Riya. She was mine and just mine.

“Look Amit, do you seriously love her? Now I tell you frankly, I have been observing you and Neha from the first day I met you. I think you are not at all serious; Instead, you just want her in bed. I do not know how far and how deep your relationship is but I think she is a good girl. Don't compare her with anyone. If you love her, don't expect anything. Just go on loving her.”

“Aadi... I am not with her for sex. I could get that for 1000rs anywhere. I want her love. She is not giving me that. I do not say she doesn't love me. However, she has different priorities. These things hurt me.”

Somewhere in my heart, I felt that he really loved Neha. I should give him a chance. But I could not believe Neha was at fault. She seemed to be nice to me. Anyways there was no point in thinking so much. I decided to give Amit one chance.

“Friends?” I moved a hand of friendship towards him.

“I considered you as a friend much earlier” he replied shaking hands.

We looked at each other and smiled. Neha entered the room. It was 12pm. I said good-bye to both of them and left. Riya was in college. I messaged her that I was coming. On the way some thoughts came in my mind.

*Was it a hand of true friendship or some plans were going on in his mind? I ignored.*

## **7 PROMISES**

Amit was discharged on Thursday. He was allowed to go to college now. He still had a bandage on his hand. But it was not serious. The four of us decided to go to Chowpatty on Saturday. I asked Swapnil, Sameer and Anup also if they were coming. Sameer had some work. He refused. Swapnil and Anup were ready to join us.

We were waiting at the ticket counter on platform no 1. I introduced Amit and Neha to everyone. They spoke to the others formally. We got the window seat. We had to get down at CST and we decided to go by taxi from there to Chowpatty.

“Amit do you booze?” Swapnil asked him. There was no need to ask this question but what must have tempted Swapnil was his pink shirt. I kicked Swapnil lightly and told him to shut up. However, he did not listen. He asked him the same question again.

“No, I don’t even smoke.” Amit said putting his hand on Neha’s shoulder.

“Good man. You seem to be mamma’s boy.” Anup added. I was enjoying all this. I did not stop them. However, I wanted to stop Neha at the very moment when she said,

“He is my Amit. He will never do things that I don’t like.”

Amit looked at me. I understood that he wanted to say that he could do anything for her but still he was dissatisfied. They continued until we reached. We were looking for taxis. Amit and Neha came by one taxi and rest of us in other. We reached Chowpatty.

Everyone including me started shouting as if they were seeing the beach for the first time. We had visited beaches many times. However, with friends it was a different experiences. We sat on the beach. I was not interested in going into the water. Mumbai beaches are not clean as they used to be. I preferred eating chaat and my favourite paavbhaaji. Amit and Riya joined me. Neha and the others were savouring the feel of sea.

“Amit what will you have?” Riya asked him.

“Nothing I won’t eat anything. I don’t like junk food.”

I knew this answer. I took out all my frustration on him

“Abe b\*\*\*\*\*d , are you insane? Or are you crazy? Are you a gladrags winner or are you Salman Khan. Whats’ wrong with you. Eat paav bhaaji along with me, don’t act smart.”

Riya kept looking at me. She was shocked to see me shouting at Amit. We looked at each other and smiled. Riya also laughed. We had paav bhaaji and Pani Puri. Riya wanted ice-cream also. I wonder why girls are crazy about ice cream. Maybe they like to waste their boyfriend’s money.

“Hey Amit, come we will go for a walk.” Neha shouted from far.

“Thank God she realized that even I was here. I thought she would enjoy herself as she wanted and then we would leave.” I could sense what Amit must be feeling. Riya pushed Amit and told him to go. He left. We were on our own. Swapnil and Anup were still in the water I thought. I could not see them. I thought maybe they had gone for a smoke. Even I felt like it. However, Riya was besides me. I ignored the temptation.

Even we went for a long walk. Holding hands, looking at each other, leaving world behind and just love all around...Romance filled the air. I was walking so close to her that we hardly had any space in between.

“Jaan how much do you love me?” Riya asked me.

I went down on the knees again and said

*Last time I proposed to you in front of five people, today I propose you in front of 1000 people. I love you and its growing rapidly day by day. I still feel currents when you touch me. I still feel it's my first kiss whenever I kiss you. I love you. I love your luscious lips. I love your caring nature. I will drop a tear in this sea. The day when someone will find this tear from the sea, I will stop loving you. We hugged each other. I pinched her cheeks.*

After sometime, we left. Neha and Riya wanted to go shopping to Nariman point and Colaba. It was about 3pm. We tried to convince them that Nariman Point was too far. However, who could argue with girls. Finally, we decided to go by taxi. We reached Colaba after some time.

Colaba had many small shops where we could get anything from shoes and sandals to clothes. Riya wanted to buy chappals while Neha wanted to buy shoes.

“Jaan, please make it fast. I hate walking for no reason.” I said to Riya.

Riya gave me an angry look and kept on walking. We went to a few shops but both the girls did not like anything. We boys decided to go somewhere else. We told Neha and Riya that they could continue, we would join them in sometime. We left towards tapri.

“Amit you really don't smoke or you said it because Neha was there with you?” Anup asked him.

“I am serious. I never tried and do not want to try.” He replied.

“Superb yaar. Why do you require money then? No smoking. No boozing. No junk food. Neha has got the cheapest boyfriend in city” Swapnil said it and we all laughed.

“Amit, whats your 1<sup>st</sup> sem result.” Swapnil asked him.

“3kt. BEE, MECHANICS AND MATHS 1.”

“How can you get a kt? I mean you must be attending college and classes regularly. You don't have any time pass like we have.” Anup said

“Oh stop it yaar. Stop talking about fucking engineering.” It frustrated me.

After some time Riya called me and said that their shopping had finished. We went near the shop where they were standing. I loved the chappals she had bought for herself. She had also bought one t-shirt for me. It was cool. She gave me a sweet smile

“Thank you jaan. I love you a lot” I put my hands on her shoulder.

We went to Mc Donald's and had a burger each. It was already 6pm. We decided to leave.

“How are we going” Amit asked.

“Do one thing, you, all go, Riya and I will come by Taxi directly.” I looked at Riya and she was surprised. I just wanted to be alone with her. I wanted to end the day spending some time with her.

They agreed and decided to go by train. They left.

“Any surprise?” she asked me with eyes wide open.

“No jaan. I just wanted you and me to be together. Nothing else. Let’s leave” I took the bag from her hand and sat in the taxi. I kept the plastic bag behind.

“Hey, do you want this Taxi driver also to come to your house and tell your Mom you were roaming around with me?” Riya smiled at me.

“Don’t worry. I won’t forget it this time.” Still Riya kept the bag beside her. Riya started asking me about our future.

“Jaan, I want to marry you.” She kissed me on my lips saying this.

This is her common trick to fool me and make me accept whatever she wanted. However, marriage? I had thought from the first day that we were moving rather fast. How could I marry so early? This was not possible.

“Jaan please.” She requested me. “Are you going crazy jaan? What marriage and all? Is it a joke? It’s not that funny.”

“Do you mean you will not marry me? Is it so?” She shouted at me. Who could make her understand it was not funny.

Finally, I decided that I did not want to end the day with a fight. I told the driver to take us to Dadar.

“Why Dadar? What happened to you now? Its late Aadi...”

“Shut up and don’t argue.” I kissed her on her lips. That’s the best way to keep someone’s mouth closed.

We reached Dadar. I gave the driver the fare and asked Riya to walk along with me. We were near plaza bus stop. I told her where we were going.

“We are going to Siddhivinayak temple”

“Why, now? We could have come some days later. What was the need now? What is going on in your mind?”

“We are marrying” as I said this she was shocked. She went cold.

“Jaan...I was not that serious. How can we marry?”

“Why, don’t you want to marry me now? If you want to then come along with me. We are not doing legal marriage. However, we will take seven promises in front of the God as in a marriage. 7 *phere*. I have decided what will be the 7 promises. Are you ready?”

She kept on looking at me for sometime and then gave a huge smile. The world was in her eyes. I could feel the way she held my hand had changed in a few seconds. It was more matured. I loved the moment. We reached Siddhivinayak temple. We entered the temple and took the blessings. Pandits do not allow anyone to stand near the image for a long time. They just pushed us away. We sat on the

marble inside the temple. I asked her permission to start. She agreed. I told her to remove her gold necklace.

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## MARRIAGE BEGINS

*I said*

*We will make 7 promises in front of the God. Then we will be husband and wife unofficially. Is it fine?*

*She agreed. I took her hand in mine.*

*Promise 1. We will always be together.*

*Promise me jaan; we will never leave each other. Promise me we will always be together. Whatever be the situation we will never leave each other alone. I too promise it.*

*I promise you Aadi I won't leave you. I will always be with you like your shadow. A shadow, which will be with you after sunset too. I will never disappear.*

*Promise 2. We will never fight.*

*Promise me even if we go wrong in some decision or have minor disagreements in future we won't fight. We will always love each other and make each other smile. No fights I also promise it.*

*I promise Aadi... I will never fight. Even if I think of fighting, I will stop talking to you but not fight. I can't handle fights between us. We will always love each other. .*

*Promise 3. We will not let our love fade.*

*Promise me even after spending years together we won't take each other for granted. We will still have warmth in our relationship. We will never let our love fade. Whenever we feel our love is fading promise me you will close your eyes and think of all the sweet times we spent in past. I too promise it.*

*I promise Aadi... I won't let our love fade. This will never happen. I just can't think of it. Going away from you is not in my destiny. I do not want to change my destiny. .*

*Promise 4. We will always trust each other.*

*Promise me whenever you feel I am hanging out with someone else or I am lying to you or anything else, you will put that thought out of your mind. You will always trust me. I too promise it.*

*I promise Aadi... I will never spy on you. I will never point a finger towards you. I will always trust you.*

*Promise 5. We will always respect each other.*

*Promise me we will always respect each other in public or private. Promise me you will never shout at me. Promise me that you will always respect me. I too promise to do the same.*

*I promise Aadi... I will always respect you. I promise to listen to whatever you say. I will never hurt you in public or private.*

*Promise no 6. We will never bring our past between us.*

*I promise I will never bring our past between our relationship. I do not mind whatever your past was. I don't care about it. However, I won't let it affect our relationship. I will never ask you about your past.*

*I promise Aadi... I too will never ask you about your past. I will forget everything about your past. Your previous relationship. I just want you in my present and future.*

*Promise no7 we will not neglect our studies..*

*I promise I will never neglect my studies. I promise I will concentrate on studies and clear engineering. I promise I will never sidetrack from studies.*

*This is not fair. Still even, I promise I will complete my engineering and get placed in some good company.*

*I put the gold necklace round her neck. She cried. This is the moment a girl waits for. This is the moment, which comes once in a lifetime. But for us it will be 2 times. We were standing in front of the God, happy together and with so many promises. Even the God would have had no choice but to accept us. Our relationship has taught us that love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction. We took one more step ahead in our relationship....*

*Aditya gets married to Riya unofficially.*

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**BEGINNING OF THE END**

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**E**xam time again. This time I wanted to study hard. Second Half of the year is dangerous. There are chances of getting dropout They can make your life hell. I had heard this from seniors. I was almost done with every subject this time including First semester papers. Even Riya had studied hard. We wanted to show folks at home that our relationship would not affect our studies. Riya had promised my Mom. She always forced me to study. She used to study herself so that I could study with her. This time even submission were smooth. I did not face any problem from any professor. This increased my confidence. I wanted to show mom what Riya could do in my life. Everyone was studying this time. Everyone was serious.

One after the other papers came and went. It was our last paper. Maths 2. The toughest paper in semester 2. However, I had studied for it. I had done a few topics of differential equation and rectifications. I was confident of passing. We had decided to drink the whole night after this paper. I had said this to Riya also. She gave me permission. After all one year in engineering was over. We should celebrate it. I did not allow Riya to join us. If girls were with us, then Poptates Restro Bar was the only option nearby. We wanted strong beer and not draught beer. Therefore, I told her to stay back at home. I promised her that I would meet her day after tommorw.

The paper started. It was not that good. It was a typical paper like every year. Tough. Still I had written, as much was needed to clear the subject. We came out of the classroom.

“I can’t believe it’s the end of one year in engineering. We will go to the second year.” Anup said.

“Seriously, even I can’t believe it’s the end of 1<sup>st</sup> year. Let’s get naughty tonight with lots of bottles and cigarettes.” This was the first time I was going to drink. I had never touched beer earlier. I was excited. No guilt feeling this time. It was the end of 1<sup>st</sup> year.

“Bachha, be within limits. Don’t drink too much. I don’t want you to get used to it. Please promise me you won’t drink too much.”

“Ok sweetheart. I won’t. Promise.”

We left home. I told everyone at home that I was going to spend night at Sameer’s place. Our plan was to drink until 1am and then sleep at Sameer’s house. His parents were away for 2 days. It was the night of fun. It was the night for my first drink.

We left our houses at around 7pm. We all decided to meet outside the bar. Sameer, Anup and Swapnil were already there. They were waiting for me. I reached within 15 min and we entered the bar. We ordered two beers and snacks. The waiter poured beer in my glass. First glass of beer in my life. I was afraid about the consequences. Should I or shouldn’t I? I was confused. However, I wanted to enjoy the end of the one year in Engineering.

“Cheers” everyone said loudly.

“Cheers to the end of one year” Anup added.

First, sip of beer. It had an awful taste. I did not like it at all. Immediately after drinking I had a few nuts. Everyone was looking at me.

“Relax. I am drinking. dont worry. I am stable. It’s just one sip till now.” We exchanged smiles.

College is like a fountain of knowledge – and the students are there to drink. We were doing the same. We ordered two more beers. One more glass. My eyes started rolling and the body was slowly losing control over the mind. I was still enjoying it. Partially stable. I was enjoying college life. Beer in one hand and cigarette in the other. Smoke all over. I was losing my senses as the glass emptied.

“Waiter, 2 more beers and a full chicken tandoori.” Swapnil ordered.

“Hey it’s enough. I will lose my senses.” I said to everyone keeping my eyes wide open.

“Oh common Aadi...have just one more glass. Then you don’t drink.” Everyone forced me. One more glass full along with 2 pieces of tandoori for munching. I took a bite of tandoori and sipped beer. Sipped again. And it continued. I was over with that glass too in about 30 minutes. I lit a cigarette. I was totally out of control.

“Aadi... remember what Riya had said. Don’t drink too much. You promised her.” Sameer was shaking my body saying this.

“Please let me relax. I am drunk. I am losing control. I want to puke.” I was about to sleep on the table itself.

“Aadi shall I call Riya and tell her what you are doing.” Sameer was angry.

“Hey Sameer, mind your own business. You can’t blackmail me by taking Riya’s name. I do not care. Do whatever you want.”

Sameer called Riya. He told Riya everything that was happening. Riya called me on my cell in 5minutes.

“Hey, jaan....what you want. Why are you calling me? You trust Sameer. However, you can’t trust me. I am not too drunk. I am still stable. Don’t worry.” I almost slept...

She said something which I couldn’t hear. The phone slipped from my hand and I slept. Sameer tried to wake me up. Anup brought some lemon to put in my mouth. They took me out of the bar. I sat on the footpath.

“Are you an idiot? How were you talking to Riya.” Swapnil shouted.

“Who are you to say this? She is my girlfriend. What you want to do? Do you also love her? Do you also want her?” this time I did not know what I was saying. The words were just coming out.

Bang. Sameer slapped me hard on my face. I fell down on footpath. Sameer did not like what I had said few minutes back. The day was over. I do not remember anything after that. It was end of the 1<sup>st</sup> year and my first drinking session.

1 year in engineering was like a piece of cake. I met new friends, we enjoyed ourselves, I met my life partner. Now I was waiting for the second year to begin. I wished it would be the same as first year.

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## 2<sup>ND</sup> YEAR – LIFE IS NOT THE SAME

It was not a happy start to second year. When I went to see the notice board to check divisions and roll numbers I realised Riya would no longer be in my class. This means we could only meet in the break. I had come late to college. Riya was already attending her lecture. She had messaged me. I went near my classroom. When I peeped into the classroom, there were all new faces. My eyes searched for Riya. I entered the class after first lecture. I stared continuously at third row but Riya was not there. The whole first year I used to watch her during lectures. I took my mobile and gave her a missed call. Again my eyes went to the third row. Riya used to look back whenever I used to give a missed call. I was missing everything. I was missing all the moments that we shared in 1<sup>st</sup> year. This was painful. I messaged her. She could not reply. Maybe she would be sitting on the first bench. This upset me more. I wanted to see her at least. Since morning, I had not called her nor I had seen her. This was not the morning I wished for. It was not what I wanted. I wanted her. I enjoyed engineering because she was with me. Now what?

I got a message from her.

*Where are you bacchaa. Did you reach college. I am in lecture. Meet you in break time.*

I replied immediately

*Miss you jaan. My eyes are staring at third row. I can't see you. :(*

I was waiting for her reply but she did not. How was I going to sit in this classroom? How could I attend lectures? How could I concentrate? How could I laugh during lectures? Each question revolved around Riya. We were separated. We did not like it but we had to put up with it. I was not comfortable with all the new faces. There was no Swapnil nor was Anup there. They were in I.T. Riya was with them. Even Sameer was not there with me. This made lectures tougher actually hell.

I was looking at my watch. Time was passing like a small baby crawling on the road. Each hour seemed like months... I was not used to this. Maybe I was used to Riya. Her smile, her sweet look, and her messages. I enjoyed all these things during the lectures. Everything was missing. I was alone.

I called Riya as the professor left the class. It was 1:30pm. Break time. Riya didn't pick the call. This was enough. I went near her class on third floor. Mine was on second. The lecture was still going on. This time every minute was like hours... after 5 minutes her lecture got over. I ran into the class .Swapnil and Riya were sitting together. I was not able to see Anup anywhere. I did not care. I wanted my sweetheart beside me. I sat beside her. We both had tears in our eyes. It was afternoon and we had not even seen each other. We hadn't even called each other.

"I missed you jaan. I really missed all the things we did in the first year. I missed your looking back at me. I missed your smile. I missed your messages. Those missed calls. This is tough jaan. I want you. How can I survive in that class? It kills me." I was holding her hands tight.

"Even I missed you. I missed your naughty smiles and your small things. I Even looked back a few times but found you nowhere. Love you. Let's eat Tiffin. I have brought your favorite rice."

She put a spoonful of rice in my mouth. I smiled.

"Hey Swapnil , where is Anup. I missed you people. The first year was superb. It's going to be difficult for me now." I said to Swapnil .

"He has gone with his friend. Some work maybe. I don't know. Even we will miss you. Especially Riya. She is upset since morning. Take her out somewhere." Swapnil patted her back

Sameer came shouting.

"Hey guys, the result is displayed. Let's go and check it."

We all were tense. Even sem results always bring a sense of apprehension. We were not confident about our results. We left the class immediately and reached the library where the result was displayed. Sameer somehow went near the board. We asked him to look for our names too. He came out of that rush and seemed to be upset.

"What happened? Did you check the result?" I asked him. We all were looking at him.

"Yes, I have. I got 4 kt in 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and 1 kt in 1<sup>st</sup> semester. I am dropped for a year." He almost cried.

This made our hearts pump abruptly. I could not believe Sameer was dropped. I searched for my name in 1<sup>st</sup> semester result. I had passed. Even Riya had passed. Swapnil had also passed. Anup got 1 kt. I still could not look for my name on 2<sup>nd</sup> semester result. I was really tense because of Sameer's result. I saw my name. 1 kt. MATHS 2.I could not believe. I was good in maths. I had scored 95 marks in HSC and 68 in maths 1. I had written maths 2 paper well enough to pass. However, it showed fail.Mumbai University- Totally unpredictable.

I saw Riya's result. She got 1 kt BEE. Swapnil had passed. Anup had also passed. I came out and went to Sameer.

"Hey Sameer don't worry, we will do something. Just chill." I consoled him.

“I cannot believe it. I have failed. My papers were not that bad. I have scored in 30s. University sucks yaar. They don’t show any kindness towards students. This is the most sucking university.” Sameer said it in frustration.

“Don’t worry. You give your papers for rechecking. Something will happen.” Riya said to Sameer.

We went home. We bunked the classes. My parents were happy with my result. I was officially in 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Mom was also happy. I still could not believe I got kt in maths 2. But maybe Sameer was right. University sucks.

Dad gave me permission to take my Honda Activa to college. It was boring going by train. One’s own vehicle was always better. Even Riya’s parents were ready to purchase a new two-wheeler. She wanted Scooty Pep. She asked me which colour would look nice. My answer was red. My favourite. Red hot and spicy girl on a red innocent and sweet Scooty Pep. We both were happy about our results. The only thing that was killing me was that I could not be with Riya during the lectures.

Second year electronics. A jail in my college. It was the worst branch in our college. Seniors always used to warn us about this. Moreover, they also warned us about one professor who was very strict. Shinde sir. He taught electronic design. ECAD 1. The subject is also very complicated. Seniors told us to attend maximum lectures of Shinde sir.

Shinde sir entered the classroom. He was not very tall. He was on the shorter side. Formally dressed, a file in his hand and he entered as if he was the king of the college. Everybody stood up as he entered the class. He had a beer belly. Except beer belly, he was perfect. He started taking attendance as he entered the class.

“I won’t manipulate the attendance at the end of semester. So attend maximum lectures. At least 75%. Those who have lower than 75% won’t be allowed to make their final submissions. The rest is up to you. So let’s start with the subject.” He said.

It made me think twice. His voice had such an impact that there was pin drop silence in the entire classroom. No one uttered a single word throughout his entire lecture. He finished teaching and left the classroom. For 1 hour, he did not even smile a bit. No doubt he taught us well. The best I had seen so far since last year. Nevertheless, he would kick our asses if we were not regular. I met Riya. I told her about Shinde sir. She did not react. She also knew this was an important lecture.

“Riya, shall I tell you one serious thing. I am thinking about it for the last few days.” I said to her while walking in the campus.

“What, any problem?” Riya stared at me.

“No problem as such. However, I think we should concentrate on our studies now. It’s the second year. Now that we are into this fucking engineering, let’s do it seriously. We cant look back now; before it is too late, let us study hard. What you think, I am not saying we will stop meeting or anything like that but about studies.”

“I think you are right. Even I was thinking the same way. However, I cannot live without meeting you or spending some time with you. Please do not tell me all these things. I can do anything else.”

Even I could not live without holding her hands and spending some time with her. We decided to be regular and start studying regularly. I was more regular than Riya. We used to meet in the break, before college and after college. We used to be together after college for hour or so and then we used to go home. But things changed. Earlier I used to bunk my last lecture and meet her. But now I would not be able to do this. Our head of department changed our timetable and he shifted Shinde sir's lecture from 5pm to 6pm. This made my life worse. I used to come in the morning to college as there were practicals now I had to attend till 6. I told Riya about this. She was upset but did not say anything. I convinced her by saying that I would meet her after college until 7pm and then go home. She agreed.

It was tough for me too. Last year Riya and I used to be together a lot. Always with each other. From morning till evening, I could see her. Even after college, we used to be together for an hour. This was impossible now. We used to come together to college. But it was hardly a few minutes with each other.

I used to reach home around 7:30pm. 2 days a week I had class at 7pm. we could not meet on those days after college. On weekends, we had the same class maths 3. It was in Aerol itself. It became too hectic for me to handle everything. I used to be stressed out at the end of the day. Riya and I always used to talk during the night. She used to call me around 11pm when our parents would sleep. It was getting tougher and tougher. Due to the hectic schedule sometimes I could not manage to talk during the night.

“Aadi... this is too much. I am not able to handle all this. Today you have to talk to me. I do not want to listen to a single excuse. I don't care if you are tired. I will talk. Just listen. Please Aadi... I love you. This is really tough. I am used to you. I am used to your touches; I am used to your sweet talk. Please.” At last she blurted out what was in her mind. It was expected.

“I know jaan. Even I want to talk. But I really get so tired that I go to sleep as soon as I fall on my bed. Don't worry today I won't do this.”

After about 30 minutes, I told her that I was feeling sleepy.

“Fine. You don't want to talk to me. Go to hell. I am mad to love you so much. Even I am tired Aadi... You think only you are attending lectures. Even I am doing the same. I am not sitting at home and doing nothing. Why do you make so much hype of small things? Since morning, I have not talked to you. Now you do not want to talk during the night also. Fine then. Get lost. Bye. Hate you.” First time I saw her so angry.

She was not wrong but I was not used to this schedule. I was not able to handle this schedule. Attending lectures without Riya was boring. It was not all fun. Even Sameer was not there. Nor the others.

I fell asleep as soon as she put the phone down. I could not keep my eyes open. Everything was getting worse. Everything seemed to be different. I got up in the morning and checked my cell. 26 missed calls and 8 messages.

Oh, shit. I thought Riya had gone to sleep last night. I should have waited for her call. But I didn't. Now it would result in a big fight. I was sure. I checked her last call. It was 4:30 am. I checked her last

message. It was 4:40am. I saw the current time. It was 9am. She would not have slept at all. I immediately called her.

*The mobile you are trying to reach is currently switched off.*

I knew she was angry...I was tensed. I hoped she talked to me. I was really tensed. I kept on calling her. Still no response. I left home to reach college. Still she didn't pick up the call. When I reached college, she picked up the call.

“Hey jaan... my wife... I am sorry. I thought you slept yesterday. I am sorry. Forgive me. This will never happen again.” I admitted my mistake.

“Let it be Aadi... Keep the phone down. I don't want to talk to you.” She said and kept the phone down.

I called her again. She did not pick up the call this time. I went to her classroom. She was sitting in the classroom. The lecture had not started yet. I convinced her somehow to come out of the classroom and talk to me. She was not even looking at me. I was continuously saying sorry to her. She was still angry. Finally, I took her bag from the classroom and started walking away.

“Aadi... what's this. Let me attend lectures. I do not want to go anywhere. Please.” she came after me.

I stopped and smiled at her. She was not in a mood to smile. She was still angry, biting her lips. I loved her in that mood too.

“You are looking so sweet. Love you a lot.” I pinched her cheeks. She came with me. She didn't talk though. We were walking towards the bus stop. I thought of calling Amit and Neha to come along with us. If just the two of us went I knew Riya would not talk to me. I called Amit and said

“Are you free Amit? What are you doing?”

“Nothing, I am with Neha in Aerol. What happened? Any work?” He asked me.

“I am going to Grant Lane with Riya..Are you both coming?” I looked at Riya.She was refusing. I kissed her cheeks. Still it did not change the situation.

Amit and Neha agreed to come along with us. They reached the bus stop after some time. We were waiting for them. I tried to convince Riya a lot. No use. I told Neha to have a word with Riya.I had messaged Amit regarding our fight. I had told him to convince Neha , Amit and I went to get bisleri giving Neha time to talk to Riya. She convinced her. I was really happy to see a smile on her face. I didn't care about Amit and Neha. I hugged her hard in front of them. I was in the seventh heaven when I saw her smile. I could have died for that smile. It felt so good to patch up after a fight. She kissed me on my cheek and said sorry. I was in tears and said to her...

“Please jaan... Never do it again. I can't live without you.Please.You don't know what was going in my heart when you were angry. I really love you a lot. I am sorry. I won't do it again. Love you.

Hurt you.Nah never. Love you? Forever. Defend you? In a heartbeat. Hate you? Impossible.”

*We left for Grant Lane.*

We sat in the garden. A passionate kiss after a big fight was really good. Fondling each other after a fight was better. In addition, feeling the other's body against one's own in open air after a fight was best. Romance was again filling the air. For last few hours, I had been afraid.

"Jaan... I thought I had lost you. I was really tensed. Please don't repeat it." I slept on her lap.

"Bachha... why are you afraid. We are married now. Don't forget that. I can't leave you. I broke the second promise today of never fighting with each other. I am sorry. However, I did not have any option else you would not have realized. You never listen to anyone unless a proof is given to you. This was the best thing I could do. I am sorry. Even I cried last night. I love you more than you love me. Missed you."

She was an angel. She made my day by saying all these things. *Love you my sweetheart.*

Neha and Amit came towards us. I got up and gave them some space to sit. Riya took her lunch box out and we started eating.

"Done with your fights?" Amit asked and smiled looking at Riya.

"Yes it's over. We can't leave without each other." Riya replied.

"Aadi... you have changed Riya. She was not the same in the school days. You have seriously changed her a lot." Amit said looking at Neha and laughed.

"What do you mean I have changed her? In fact she has changed me. If she had not been there I would have left engineering for sure." I said.

"She was very mischievous. Many of my friends liked her. However, she never used to entertain anyone except one. I don't remember his name. Riya who was he?" Amit asked

"I don't remember. What are you talking about? I never entertained anyone. I can't remember." Riya wondered loudly.

"Remember our class picnic to Alibag. That time you were walking on beach with that guy. Then you slept on his lap for the whole night. Remember?" Amit said.

Riya looked at me. I looked at Riya. What was Amit talking about? Riya had never said anything about this. I was unaware of these things. She slept on some one's lap for the whole night at Alibag beach. What was I hearing?

"What are you saying Amit. You must be joking for sure? Right?" I asked him. I wanted him to say he was joking.

"I am serious. I thought Riya had told you about this. Anyways forget it. Let's leave. We are getting late." Amit apologised me as he thought I must be knowing about this. He also told me not to fight on this now. However, I couldn't stop myself. Amit and Neha were walking ahead of us.

“What is this Riya? You slept with someone? The whole night? Was this a small thing that you never told me about It.?” I lost my temper. I did not want them to listen to me. Therefore, I walked slowly.

“Bachha... I never slept with anyone. Are you mad? I am just yours. How can I do these things? It was hardly 5 minutes that I had slept on his lap. That too I just rested my head on his lap. He was like my brother.”

“I don’t care about it. Who was he? Why did you hide it from me? You should have told me that you had slept with him”

“Are you mad? I am saying I did not sleep with anyone and you are telling me I should have told you. There was nothing to say. It was hardly a few minutes. Nothing serious. He was like my cousin. I didn’t have any feelings for him”

I did not want to fight with her at that moment. I accepted what she said. She was almost crying. I could not see her crying. I was hurt by seeing her cry. I changed the topic and pulled her close to me. She rested on my shoulders in bus. I was playing with her hair. She slept on my shoulders. I did not wake her up. Thoughts were running in my mind. It was getting worse . Lectures, classes, no time to meet, no time to call each other and talk for hours, frequent fights, and she sleeping with someone else. I decided to break all the promises I took in Siddhivinayak temple. I wanted to see if I could live without Riya. I loved her. However, I wanted to test myself. I wanted to test my fate. I decided to break up. *I decided to break up with Riya.*

We got down at Aerol where I had parked my Aactiva. I said good-bye to her and we left for home. I was sure about breaking up. *Maybe the worst decision I could take. Nevertheless, I did take it.*

## **CANT BE SEPARATED**

**T**here are few things more difficult than breaking a relationship. What began with mutual attraction, followed by excitement and joy, became uncomfortable somewhere along the way at least for me. Whatever the reasons were, it was enough for me to conclude that breaking up was the only thing left to do. I was feeling somewhat guilty; perhaps a lot guilty. To be the one whose decision it was to break a relationship is a very difficult position to be in, it hurts. Every good thing comes to an end. Perhaps my relationship was a good one for a long time and then just

wound down to this point. Maybe it was a hot, torrid, quick love that exploded with every raw emotion there was.

I messaged her.

*Jaan, I love you. You can't imagine how much I care for you; you gave me a direction to live my life. However, a few disputes that have taken place in the last few weeks are hurting me. I tried to move on but it's not happening. I feel that the charm we had is missing. I have made a decision.. I think we both should give our self some time. I am not saying I won't talk to you or message you. But we should take a break. It's time to think over. Let's see can we really can't live without each other. I am sorry. Please take care of yourself.*

She immediately called me. I avoided her call. My heart was crying but I had to do this. I was trying hard to go away from her. I wanted to see whether I could live without her. I was not able to forget the night at Alibag and what might have happened. I wanted to get good scores too. It was difficult to handle everything.

She was continuously calling me and messaging me. One of her messages brought tears in my eyes...

*"You used to say that your heart skips a beat when you see me or feel my touch or when I speak or when I smile. So what happened now? Even my heart used to skip a beat when I used to see you. However, that one beat will give me lifetime of tears now. I will never love again. I will never trust anyone again. I will always love you and wait for you. Miss you. Your so called bachha. Your unofficial wife. Saying you final good bye by kissing your ring."*

I replied to her again...

*Please do not cry jaan. For me at least. I have not gone too far. I am still with you. Just give me some time. Love you. Miss you.*

I reached college in the morning. It was not the same. There was no hand, which I used to hold everyday. There was no smile, which used to make me smile everyday. There were no eyes which would stare at me everytime Something was missing. I was alone. I wanted her. Still....

She came into my classroom. I could see her swollen eyes. She must have cried the whole night. She still had tears in her eyes. I was feeling much more guilty now. I told her not to cry. I wiped her tears. That made her cry more. I played with her cheeks. And I saw a small smile on her face. I again told her to give me few days...

I wanted to tell this to everybody. I messaged Swapnil and the others to bunk the lecture and come to Aerol station. They all agreed. I told them everything, that had happened in last few days including our fights, Alibag night out, and every small thing. Finally, I told them I had broken up.

Swapnil got up and came near me. He slapped me as hard as he could. I was shocked for a few minutes. Nobody spoke a word.

"Remember my words. I had warned you in the beginning itself. She is a nice girl. She is like my sister. How dare you take this decision? She loves you so much and you are acting as a fool. You must have slept with her. Now you need someone else. Right?" Swapnil shouted.

“Its not the case yaar. You are misunderstanding me. I still love her but I need time. A few days. You will never understand. Let it be. I am leaving.” I left and started walking home. I was more upset now. I thought at least my friends would support me. However, no one did. I thought I had taken the wrong decision. But I couldn't handle it now. She was calling me continuously until I reached home. I did not pick a single call. I was more hurt than anyone else. However, no one understood why I was asking time to think. My love for her was increasing. I wanted to feel the same. Was it true love or not? I just wanted a few days.

I reached home. I stopped looking at my cell as it was continuously vibrating. I checked my miscalls when I entered my bedroom. I saw two calls of Neha and one call of Amit. Riya must have told them what I did. I called Amit back.

“Hey Aadi... have you lost your mind? Why are you hurting Riya? She loves you so much. Even you love her so much. Then why are you both hurting each other? I really don't understand the reason. Just because she slept with some one else in Alibag you will leave her” as Amit said this I stopped him and said...

“She didn't sleep with any one. She just rested her head on his lap. She did not sleep with anyone. Did you get me? And who are you to say she slept with someone. Keep the phone down.” I kept the phone down and called Neha. Neha picked up the call, she was crying. I asked her what was wrong with her. It didn't seem they had a fight. Amit did not speak about it when I called him.

“Aadi, Riya had called Amit. She was crying badly. She told him everything that had happened between her and you. We were in Grant Lane when Riya called and told him everything. Amit was quite disturbed. He went away and said something to her for almost 15 min. Then he came back and was smiling. I wonder what he said I am tensed.” Neha kept on crying.

How foolish this girl is. What is the situation I am going through and this girl has some useless things to talk. They were friends. Amit and I were also good friends. We shared a nice relationship. He must have told Riya how much I love her. He was saying the same to me. I did not respond to Neha. I kept the phone down. It did not seem important to me. It was not a big issue. Amit goes away and talks with Riya. What's wrong in it? I wished Neha was in front of me. I would have killed her. An idiot.

I received a call from Riya. I picked the call. She did not say a single word. She was crying and crying. I did not keep the phone down. It would have been insulting to her. She was not able to speak. She was disappointed. She played our song. I was listening to it. It brought tears in my eyes. It was the same song we used to sing for each other. The same song on which we used to kiss each other, smile at each other. But today with the same song playing, we were crying. I wanted to kill myself. I could not bear this. I pleaded with Riya to stop crying. But she didn't. I had to keep the phone down. She called again. I did not pick up. I got one message from her saying *good bye*. Tears rolled down. I cried. Just when you thought that the dam you had built around your heart to keep the pain at bay would hold strong... It sprang a leak. Eating away at the aching pieces until it was torn down... and your eyes were nothing more than fountains of bitter tears that drained you of all emotion leaving you hollow and empty...desolate...inside.

And strangely enough, I knew all this was going to happen. But no one told me it could hurt this much. My heart ached. I could not bear this any more. I picked up the phone and called her.

“Tujhe dekh dekh sona....tujhe dekh kar hai jagna ...” I cried and cried. I couldn’t sing any more. She continued with the song. We were crying for whole night. We couldn’t speak a word. I said sorry to her and..... we were together again.

## END OF ROMANCE

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We were enjoying each day after being together again. Amit and Neha became close to us. Amit became more close to me. We used to call each other frequently. I started liking him as a friend. He used to ask me about my relationship and whatever was happening. He helped me a lot.

“Aadi... Tomorrow we have to go to Ratnagiri for few days. Some important work has to be done and you need to be there. So inform your class professor. “Mom told me as I was leaving for class.

It was Saturday. I had maths class in Aerol. We four used to be together along with Swapnil. Seeing Riya and me together again, Swapnil seemed to be happy. He used to care a lot for Riya. He apologised to me for the slap. I was sitting beside Riya in class making naughty hand movements on her dress under the table. She was stopping me and laughing. We were happy together. It felt nice to be back with her. I wanted to take studies seriously, I wanted to attend lectures regularly, and to study daily. I tried to do all these things. I could not do it without Riya. I studied for her. I attended lectures for her. I missed her a lot in that period. We were back again. This time my love had no limits. I loved her like crazy.

As the class got over, I told Riya that I was leaving for Ratnagiri and would be back in few days. Her face fell hearing this. I kissed her on her cheeks and told her how much I loved her.

“I will miss you a lot jaan. If Dad had not been there I would have told you also to come along with us. Love you. Miss you.” I said holding her hands tightly.

We spent some time together and I left for home. I left early next morning. I messaged her that I had left. She did not reply. She must be sleeping.

“Jaan, it will take me 4 days to return. Miss me a lot. Keep kissing my ring. Love you. Miss you too” I messaged her.

I didn't get any reply. After some time I got a reply Miss you too.

4 days seemed to be too much to live without her. I was not able to concentrate on anything. I wanted to get back home. I wanted to look into Riya's eyes. I wanted to feel her touch. I wanted to make her smile. I wanted to hear her voice. I called her 2 or 3 times but she didn't pick up the call. The place where I was staying did not have good network coverage. It was distorted. Maybe that is why she did not call me back. I received a few messages from her. However, no calls. I was really missing her a lot.

The work was almost done. It was our last day in Ratnagiri.

I messaged her....

*When our song comes on the radio, I can't help thinking of you and I start crying. When I go to bed at night, I cry because I miss you so much. Jaan I need you.*

*I want to see you. It's been 4 days and it feels like four weeks. I love you so much. I am leaving now. I will be back tomorrow morning. I hope you are also excited to see me.*

I wanted to be with her. But she was miles away. I wished she could call me, which would make my day better.

If I could hear her voice, nothing would be more beautiful. But I could not complain. I did not have proper network coverage.

I reached home in the morning. I slept for 3 hours. As I got up, I called Riya. But she did not pick my call. I tried again. She still did not pick it up. I tried messaging her that I was back and wanted to meet her but still no reply. I was afraid. What had happened? This made me tense and without calling her, I went to Aerol so that I could tell her I was in Aerol only. I could not wait to see her face. I wanted to see her smile. I drove my Activa almost at full speed and reached Aerol. I called her again. Still no response. I had told her not to go college today. Maybe she was in college. I went straight to the college. I looked for her everywhere but I could not find her. I called Swapnil.

“Have you seen Riya? Did she come to college?”

“No. She didn't come to college today. She was not there yesterday also. She came only on Monday and Tuesday. What happened any problem?” Swapnil asked me.

“Nothing. Nothing serious. I am trying to contact her. But she is not picking up my call. Not even replying to my messages. Therefore, I thought she must be in college. It's ok.”

I kept the phone down and called her again. She picked up my call.

“Where are you?” She asked me in very soft voice.

“I have just reached Mumbai and now I am in Aerol. I am trying to call you from a long time. Where are you?” I asked her in a tense voice.

“I am in a lecture. You come to college directly. When are you coming? I will meet you after college. I have practical. Sorry. Bye” she kept the phone down.

I was surprised at hearing what she said. I was in college a few minutes back. I had looked for her everywhere. I had checked her classroom also and confirmed with Swapnil . Why was she lying to me? I was confused. Again I called Swapnil .

“Swapnil , are you sure Riya is not in college? Did you check in the lecture? She must be in class.” I tried to confirm.

“No, she is not in college. I was present for the last lecture. She was not there. I thought she must be with you.” Swapnil said.

“She told me she is in a lecture. She has practicals and she will meet me in the evening.” I said in low tone.

“She must be joking for sure. Maybe some surprise for you for coming back.” He kept the phone down.

This could be a possibility. She must be planning a surprise for me. I was not with her for days. I was excited at what surprise it must be. Maybe some special arrangements at home or the restaurant. It could be anything.

I called Neha. She would be aware of these things.

“Hey Neha, how are you?Where is my jaan? I want to see her smile. What planning is going on? A big surprise huh.” I asked her.

“Aadi, I want to meet you now. Where are you? Come near sec 19. It’s urgent.” Neha replied.

“Ok fine. Surprise in sec 19. Superb. I am coming right now. I will reach in 5 min. Come soon. I am excited. Bring my jaan also,” I kept the phone down and reached sec 19. Neha was not there.

I was about to call her when she reached. She was alone. My eyes searched for Riya. She was not there. I asked Neha about it. She started crying. I asked her what the matter was.

“Aadi, Amit is avoiding me for a few days. He is not behaving nicely with me. From the day I shouted at him in Grant Lane when Riya called him, he is not treating me nicely. I am afraid I might lose him. Please do something Aadi.He will listen to you. Please.”

I wanted to meet Riya desperately and Neha was telling me to talk to Amit. This meant Neha did not know anything about the surprise. She was crying a lot. I could not see her crying like that. I called Amit. He did not take the call. I messaged him to call me back as he is free. I asked Neha about Riya.

“I don’t know where she is. I did not meet her after you went to Ratnagiri. I did not call her also. I was not in the mood to talk to her. I was at home only. But you please talk with Amit. Please.” She cried again.

I calmed her and left. I promised her I would talk to Amit and ask him to behave nicely. But even he was not picking up the call. Nobody knew where Riya was. I called her again. Her cell was switched off. I was afraid. I could not think anything and told Neha to call at her home.Neha told me that her Mom picked up the call and said Riya was in college. Now this was something unusual. Riya was not in college. Where could she be?

I went home. I was very upset by whatever had happened. I messaged her again.

*Jaani where are you. I am tensed up. Please reply. What has happened to you? I am sorry if I did something wrong. However, please reply.*

I got her reply finally...

*I am with my boyfriend. Ha ha...*

I knew this was a joke. She was laughing at the end of message. Even I replied.

*So how is your new boyfriend? Is he hot like me?*

*I message received. It was Riya.*

*Ya he is hot. He is an expert kisser. I kissed him.*

*I replied.*

*Oh seriously. Superb. So you must be happy now. You got someone better than me. Congrats. Where are you?*

*I message received. It was Riya again*

*I am in Grant Lane with him. Yes, I got someone better than you. He is sweet and does not give reasons like you.*

*I replied.*

*Stop joking jaan. Now it's hurting. I want to meet you. Where are you? I am coming to Aerol.*

*I message received. It was Riya.*

*I told you I am in Grant Lane with him. Meet you tomorrow morning. I will give you a big surprise.*

*I replied.*

*Wow. I knew this. Thanks a lot. Even I will give you a small surprise. Miss you. I will come to Aerol tomorrow morning at 10am. then we will decide whether to attend college or not. Good night. Miss you. Love you. Muaah....*

I slept. I was waiting for next morning. . I was eager to meet my sweetheart after a week almost. It had never happened before. I always saw her. At least saw her smile everyday. It happened for the first time in last 1 year....I decided to take chocolates for her and a greeting card saying Miss You. I took the best card available in the shop. It said...

*I want to be in your arms where you hold me tight and never let you go....  
I may be away but...  
Even when we are far apart...  
Distance can never change,  
The love between us...  
The love I have for you in my heart....  
Love you always....*

I reached Aerol and met her. I hugged her immediately as I saw her. I was about to kiss her when she stopped me and pushed me away. I was surprised to see her behavior. She had never pushed me whenever or wherever I kissed her or hugged her. I asked her what had happened to her.

*"I have a boyfriend now. Please don't do all these things"...*

I was shocked. What was she saying? Was she still joking?

I asked her "Who is he? Are you serious?"

*"Yes I am serious. I called you here for telling this only."*

I could not handle this. I started crying instantly I took my cell phone out and called Swapnil. He did not pick up the call. He might be in a lecture. I called Sameer. He picked up the call. I told him what Riya was saying.

"Aadi, don't cry. Please stop crying. Please. First listen to her and then call me. Just see at least what she is saying." Sameer said and kept the phone down. I could not stop crying. I thought she had done it purposely. Still I asked her the name of her new boyfriend. she said.

*"You want to know the name of my new boyfriend. He is better than you are. He cares for me better than you do. Moreover, the most important thing is he loves me more than you do. He never gave me reasons in last 5 days. I like him."*

I asked her "Was he the reason you were not picking my call and replying me when I was away? I thought you missed me.?"

*"I did not miss you at all. He was with me always. I tried calling you so many times. But you didn't bother.*

*You want to know his name?"* Riya said and had a wicked smile. Maybe to show me I was not worth of her.

*"His name is Amit. I like him. Maybe love him. He proposed to me a few days back. I accepted it 2 days back. We both like each other. Sorry Aadi... you hurt me a lot. Good bye."*

She left. I was standing there alone with a greeting card in my hand and chocolates. I called Amit and asked him what the truth was.

*“Yes we are in relationship. I don’t think I need to tell you anything more. Good bye.”*

## **Riya’s confession in her own words**

*Aditya- The name that came to my life and all happiness followed along with you. The day I met you I had decided it could be just you. I had never experienced what true love was. There were a few occasions when I had liked a few people, but I had never loved anyone. You were my first love. I realized why people go mad in love after I met you. 14<sup>th</sup> November when you proposed to me , 16<sup>th</sup> November when we went together for the first time, our first kiss, your first touch on my body, all the sweet moments in the central garden , each moment which we spent in Grant Lane , our engagement, our marriage , everything , every day , every minute ,every second it was you all over my mind , it was just you in my heart. It was a dream come true.*

*However, as days passed I observed some sudden changes in you. They were so hard to believe that I could not ignore them. You started drinking beer suddenly; suddenly studies became more important to you. You avoided me. I never thought my dream man Aditya would behave like this. I never thought my Mr Perfect would ignore me. I never felt that I would lose my romantic Aadi who used to sing songs for me, who went on his knees to propose to me. Every single moment faded. I never made good friends in college, as I loved your company. Suddenly you went away from me. I was all alone in college. I did not have any one to share my feelings with. I could have told Swapnil and Anup but I did not as I never wanted to hurt your friendship with them. This made me more alone. I went deeper in my own skill. You never realized all this. Earlier you used to understand every small need of mine but how could you ignore my heart? How?*

*It started from the day you ignored my calls. Remember? More than 20 calls I think. Right? I was awake for the whole night. I wanted to talk to you. I wanted to tell you a few things that I could not. I called Amit to ask what was wrong with you. His call was busy. He was talking with Neha. He called me after an hour or so. I told him about you. I told him about our problems so that he could make you understand.*

She could have talked about the problems to Neha. She could have expressed her feeling in front of Swapnil. I didn’t understand how it would have hurt our friendship. Maybe she just wanted excuses.

I said sorry for whatever I did that night. I said I was tired. Even I am human. She could have understood. I love you jaan. I love you. Why did you do this?

*As Amit came to know about the problems in our relationship, he said...*

*“What are you saying; I never thought Aditya can behave like this. He seemed perfect. What happened to him? He loves you so much. Every time we talk, we talk about you. He is a darling. I can’t believe he is behaving like this.”*

Bloody rascal. If he thought I was perfect why is he dating my jaan. My jaan was also so foolish. People had always taken advantage of her sweetness. Now it was Amit.

*“Amit, just think what might be running through my mind. I never gave him any chance to complain. I gave him whatever he wanted. I gave him all the best moments on his birthday. Still he is behaving as if I am no one in his life. I called him so many times. Please can you call him and ask?” I requested him.*

*This is the reason he called you that day. Even Neha called you that day. But you still didn’t bother. You wanted your sleep. Amit called me again that night.*

*“Aditya is not picking up the call. He might be sleeping. He might be tired today. Don’t think much. This is new to you. I am used to all these things. Neha always does this to me. I wait outside the college for hours and she never bunks lectures. I want to meet her but she never meets me. I am used to this type of behavior”*

*I cried. I was crying a lot. He consoled me saying he would talk to you. He did talk to you. Still you never heard him. You were changed Aadi... I had lost my old Aditya. He died. He died the day our exams ended.*

I knew this bastard would tell Riya about his problems with Neha. There was no need to tell her that he was used to it. What the hell did he mean? Why did he want to persuade Riya to get used to it, I never did anything purposely. Every time even I am thinking of you. Its not that I had stopped loving you. I wanted to give you all happiness in the future. I wanted to study for you. So that my mom would accept you from her heart. You didn’t understand this much? Why bachha? Why?

*Your behavior became worse day by day. I thought you had stopped loving me. I thought you never loved me. Did you? Why did you change suddenly? The day you said you wanted ta a break I almost lost my senses. I never wanted to hear this. I never thought I would hear it. We loved each other so much that I never thought you would betray me. I still don’t understand your reason to say that. I was really upset. I was broken completely. I was in pain, I was frustrated, and all I could think about was you and your love.*

*What could I do? How could I save a broken relationship? Breaking up is a terrible, painful experience, no doubt, especially if you feel that you have lost the love of your life. Amit was with me in these days. He supported me when I needed some one whom I could rely on, whom I could tell what I was feeling. I tried contacting you. I tried messaging you. You never responded to any of my calls.*

When she knew how it felt after a break up, why did she do the same thing to me? Was she taking a revenge? When she knew how much it pained why did she do the same to me? She felt that love of her life is lost. However, I felt like I had lost my life to itself, please come back jaan. Please come back. I need you. I am still your Aditya.

*In those days, Amit asked me for a ride. A long ride. A long ride on his bike. I didn't accept it, as I didn't want to hurt you. When he asked me for ride, I tried calling you. You messaged me not to disturb you. You wanted your studies. I was really upset that day. The next day Amit again asked me for a ride. I didn't get any reply from you. I accepted his offer to go with him for a ride. I wanted someone to share my feelings. I thought spending some time with him would change my mood and help me smile at least. I met him at the depot. He was waiting for me with his bike. He had brought chocolate for me. It brought a smile on my face. I sat on his bike and we headed towards Palm Beach Road.*

If anyone wanted to know how to take advantage of the sweetest girl in town, if any one wanted to know how to use the emotions of a girl he should contact Amit. He never thought once about Neha before asking her for a ride. What about her love? Was she nothing? What was happening? Why was Amit doing this? I wanted to hit him straight on his dick. How could one do this?

*He was driving too fast. I avoided holding him but I had to as he was driving fast. I got hold of him by his waist. It brought tears in my eyes. It was the first time I touched someone after you had come in my life. I was feeling awkward. I told him to slow down. He did. I removed my hand from his waist. He made me smile, he made me laugh. After an hour or so, we left sea woods.*

This is unreal. I cannot believe this. I wanted to pinch myself to see whether it was a bad dream or something like that. But I was facing the toughest moment. My girlfriend holding some other guy on his bike while going for a long drive. What was worse than this? There was. The worst part was that bloody guy was my friend. I could not hear this. This was the blackest day in my life. How could Riya do this? How could Amit allow Riya to do this? Each thought killed me from inside.

*As we reached Grant lane I said...*

*"Where are we going Amit? It's late."*

*"I wanted to tell you something about Neha. Let's go to that garden. We will leave in half an hour. Is it fine?" he asked me.*

*"Ok fine. No problem. But we will leave early. Otherwise Aditya will shout at me."*

*We reached the garden. It was already dark. We sat on the bench in a corner. He bought ice cream for me. As we were having ice cream, he said...*

*“Riya, I am not happy. I am not getting what I want. I am giving my best still my expectations are not fulfilled.” Amit almost cried.*

*“What happened? Any problem? I did not get you. Any conflicts with Neha?” I asked him.*

*“Yes. She does not give any respect to me. I wait for her bunking my college and she doesn't care. She gives me excuses. I call her in the break when she is with her friends. We have never shared a relationship, which you look for in a lifetime. I really admire your relationship with Aditya.” He said*

*“What admire? Can't you see how Aditya is behaving with me? All charm in our relationship has gone.” Tears rolled down my eyes.*

*“I always wanted a girl who would care for me, who would look after my small needs, who will understand my feelings who would love me more than anyone in this world. When I will be with her, I will forget what is going around me. When she will hold my hand, I would feel like I have achieved everything in life. When I will kiss her, I would feel she was the only one I wanted. I wanted a girl like this.” Amit said.*

*I was having ice cream and he continued saying....*

*“I really don't see any quality in Neha. She is a very different kind of girl. Her priorities are different. Her life is different. I wanted a girl who would be with me for a lifetime Who would give me priority. During school days, I thought Neha would be the girl who could do all these things. However, I was wrong. She didn't. Today I think I took a wrong decision.”*

*I was looking at him.... He continued.*

*“The day I saw you I liked you. You were a changed girl. Any one could fall for you at the first sight. But I ignored you. I loved Neha. But day by day, we came closer. We started talking during nights for hours. I really felt you were the girl whom I could trust; I didn't know why Riya? I don't know what's happening. I should not do this. I should ignore this temptation. I should keep my self calm. I should stop my heart from doing this. But I really could not. If you don't like this please stop, me and I would not repeat it. I promise. Nevertheless, for now I want you. I want to feel you. I want to feel what was in you that was forcing me to do what I am going to do. I want to feel your lips.” Amit stared at me.*

OH GOSH! THIS WAS EXTREME. IF HE WAS IN FRONT OF ME I WOULD HAVE BEEN IN JAIL FOR A MURDER CASE. HOW COULD MY FRIEND THINK LIKE THIS? HE NEVER GAVE A THOUGHT ON OUR FRIENDSHIP. OUR FRIENDSHIP MEANT NOTHING. THIS GIRL WHOM HE WANTS TO KISS MEANS NOTHING TO ME. MY FEELINGS, MY LOVE, MEANS NOTHING TO HIM. I HEARD PEOPLE CHANGE. HOWEVER, TO THIS EXTREME I NEVER THOUGHT. WHY DID GOD MAKE MY Riya SO SWEET THAT SHE COULD FALL IN A TRAP SO EASILY? RIYA WAKE UP.OPEN YOUR EYES. THIS GUY IS FOOLING YOU. HE JUST WANTS PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIP. PLEASE JAAN.WAKE UP BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE. I WOULD HAVE TOLD HER ALL THIS BUT I NEVER KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING BEHIND ME.

*I was shocked to hear this from him. I wondered why he was saying this. I thought hard as he was saying all this. Before I could react, he came closer and touched my lips. Before I could tell him that it was wrong, he felt my lips. Before I could tell him that I was committed to you he I felt his saliva in my mouth. Before I could tell him we are wrong, he kissed me passionately. Before I could feel anything about you, he closed my eyes. Before I could stop myself, he was so much into me that I could not stop him. Rather I could not stop myself from kissing him. I still don't know it was right or wrong. But I can still feel that moment. The way he looked in my eyes. I saw the same love that was in your eyes. Before I could resist, he went on kissing me....*

I would like to say Just one one word. I am no longer alive. I am dead. I am broken. I am shattered into pieces. Riya kissed. Who? My good friend.... My friend Amit kissed. who? My sweetheart. My Riya.... What was I doing? I was bloody listening to whatever happened. Did she enjoy it?

*I stopped him finally. We did not speak a word. Both of us had tears in our eyes. Both of us cried. We again came closer. We kissed again. We hugged. It was all because of frustration. It was all because of depression. I never wanted this to happen. I wanted you. I wanted my Aditya. MY MR PERFECT. However, destiny had something else in store for me.*

Now what's the use saying she never wanted this to happen. It had happened. It was reality. Not a dream. Not a nightmare. She had kissed. She had kissed my friend in the same garden where we had spent my birthday.

She would not have remembered anything. Did I mean nothing to her?

*We returned. We didn't speak a single word. He left me near my house. I went home. I slept on my bed. The bed sheet became all wet. I could not control my tears. The first time in the last few days I did not know why these tears were coming out. In the last few days, I had cried for you. But today I was confused. Was it for you who betrayed me or was it because of Amit who had made me smile...?*

*I still did not know why the tears came. But I loved you. I loved you like crazy and you can't deny that fact. The entire college knew this.*

He was wrong, very wrong. I was disappointed with him. He should not have taken advantage of my girl friend. He should not have crossed the line. It was impossible to forgive him; I would not be able to forget it... ..

If the heart was the most important organ, then why did it break so easily. I would still forgive her. But Amit had made so much impact on her that she just ignored my love. She had forgotten everything.

*Pyaar mein ashk bahate kyu hai...*

*Do dil ek dusre ko tadpaate kyu hai...*

*Kehte hai pyaar zindagi hai...*

*Toh phir pyaar ko khel banate kyu hai.....*

## **Those 5 days by Riya. Her own words**

*I was guilty. I wanted to tell you whatever had happened. I wanted to confess in front of you that I had kissed Amit. I never wanted to go away from you. If I had told you about the kiss, the distance between us would have increased. I didn't want to lose you. Your I decision changed our lives.*

*I decided not to go anywhere. It would have increased his feelings towards me. I did not want to hurt Neha. She was my only good friend in college. I decided not to talk to him often. Even if he was the one who made me smile I avoided him.*

*I could not forget our first kiss. I could not forget the feel of it. Why did you take the decision of going away from me? One decision of yours changed everything jaan. I never wanted this to happen. I wanted to marry you. But you changed everything.*

*Amit called me the next day. He wanted to meet me.*

*He said "Please forget whatever happened yesterday. I know you love Aadi. I know you can never be mine. But can we meet as friends? I want to see you."*

*"No Amit. I can't. After whatever happened yesterday I can't meet you. I don't want to encourage you and be the reason of your break up with Neha. Please. I am sorry." I kept the phone down.*

*I was confused. Why did I refuse to meet him? I should say I didn't want to encourage myself. I was really frustrated and wanted to leave all the things behind. I wanted to forget you... But I thought it was bringing me closer to Amit.*

*That night you called me. I was overwhelmed when I heard your voice. I was in tears. I could not stop them. You sang our favorite song. Tujhe dekh dekh sona.....*

*It made me cry even more. I could not say anything. I realized then you were my true love. I realized no one could replace you. I loved you jaan. I loved you a lot. I was excited to feel you again and talk*

*to you the next morning in class. I thought we could spend entire day together. But you were leaving for Ratnagiri. I was upset after hearing this. I went home. I was checking my mailbox. God know what came to my mind I checked your mailbox too. I saw a mail in your draft. A girl named Muskaan had mailed you...*

*It was ...*

*Hi sweetie. I am missing you. I enjoyed every moment with you. You can make any girl high to extreme. Your body looks so hot when you are wet. I love you. I love your back. I can never forget that we had a bath together. My bed is missing you. I want you right now on my bed. Please come back to my home. I am waiting.*

*16th September.*

*I could not believe what I was looking at. You had never told me about Muskaan. You slept with her. You had a bath with her. My blood pressure became low. Doctors told me to rest. I was shattered. I wanted someone with whom I could share all these things. But there was no one. I was all alone. I could have accepted you with all these things if you had told me. But you didn't. You lied to me. You had told me once that you had not been physical with any girl. You lied. I could never trust you. Things were getting worse. I loved you a lot. I was always so frank with you. Still you lied to me. It was a shock for me. I called Swapnil to ask him who Muskaan was. He told me everything about her. He told me every small thing he knew about you and Muskaan.*

*"Muskaan was Aditya's girlfriend. They were very close to each other. They had shared a physical relationship. She was from Delhi. She was his friend's friend. I had asked him to tell you everything. But he didn't. Don't worry now, he is committed to you. He doesn't even speak to any girl now. He really loves you a lot."*

*I could not forget whatever I had seen. Muskaan was your girlfriend. But you given me a different name. You had a few girlfriends. You kept on lying. This was the cheapest mail I had ever seen. You are the cheapest guy too. You broke all the promises you had made to me.*

*Each promise was broken*

- 1. We will always be together... You left me alone.*
- 2. We will never fight.... You broke up with me.*
- 3. Our love will never fade.... You cheated on me.*
- 4. Trust.... I can't trust you anymore.*
- 5. Respect for each other.... You never understood my feelings.*
- 6. Forget each other's past..... Now I understand why this promise was taken.*
- 7. Good education... I never cared about it when I was with you.*

*You broke all promises jaan. You broke my life into pieces. Some things happen even if we don't want them to. And we have to accept them. Even I had to accept that you had changed. You were not my Aadi. You had changed a lot. You had made your own world. I was depressed. I wanted someone with whom I could share all these things. I could not control myself. I called Amit. I told him everything that I had seen. He asked me to meet him in Aerol. I went to meet him.*

*“Riya, please don't cry. You can't change the things that have already happened. Please stop crying.” He also wept.*

*“I never thought Aadi would behave like this. He never told me he had slept with someone. I could have accepted him if he had told me. But he didn't. I am hurt. I can't trust him anymore.” I told him. He made me smile in those tough moments also. I was getting attracted towards him. He tried to kiss me. But I didn't allow him. I was depressed. I wanted to be alone. This was the reason I didn't answer you when you left for Ratnagiri. I wanted to go away from you. I could never trust you. I called you so many times. But your phone was out of coverage area. You must have kept it purposely.*

*The next day Amit messaged me. He asked me for a date.*

*“Riya, if you don't have any problem can we go to south Mumbai. Full day. We will come back by the evening. Let's enjoy ourselves.”*

*I agreed to go with him. I was waiting for him at the bus stop. He came with his bike. We left. As we reached south Mumbai we went to Mc Donald. We enjoyed ourselves the entire day. After a long time I was laughing and having a good time. We went to reclamations, carter road. It was fun. It was 5 pm. We decided to return. Amit was driving his bike slowly. He was looking at me continuously in the rear view mirror. Even I was looking at him. I smiled. He gave me his hand. I caught hold of it. He was catching it tightly. I could feel the warmth in his hands. He was still looking at me. Suddenly he squeezed my thighs. I stopped looking at him. I again glanced at the mirror. He was still looking at me. We reached Aerol. I thanked him for a lovely day.*

*“Is it urgent for you to go home?” Amit asked me.*

*“No. Nothing like that. I have time. Why?”*

*“We can go to my place. There is no one at home. If it's fine with you.” Amit said.*

*I was confused. I was afraid to go to his home. Still I accepted the offer. We went to his house. It was a small house. Just 1 room. I sat on the sofa. He went in kitchen to make tea for me. He came and sat beside me. He moved closer to me. I moved away from him.*

*“What happened Riya. You are looking hot today. You are beautiful. You understand me so well.” Amit smiled.*

*We were both looking into each other's eyes. I wanted to break all the barriers and go with him. I had started liking him. He sensed that. He squeezed my thighs again. We kissed each other. We did many more things than a kiss. We went all the way that day. I still don't know if it was for revenge or I had started loving him. Maybe it was a mixture of both. I went home. Amit messaged me...*

*“I wanted a girl like you. I always wished to have a girlfriend like you. Can we be together? I love you. Listen to your heart. Don't worry about the world. I will face entire world if you are with me. Don't think about what people will think. Think and answer me.... I will wait.”*

*I tried calling you again. But same response. You must be busy sleeping with someone. I gave a thought on Amit's proposal.*

*And we came close and today we are together....*

I was speechless. I could not speak a word. I had lost myself. I had lost everything. Still after hearing this why did my heart still love her. I wanted her back. I was ready to forgive her for whatever she had done in the last 5 days. All I could think of was what she had done for me in the last 1 year and not in the last 5 days. I wanted her badly. Jaan I love you. Please come back jaan. Please come back. I love you a lot.

I wanted my Riya back...

## **MISTAKES UNFORGIVEN**

So this was final... So final.

Why did it have to end like this?

Leaving without a single word... I didn't understand.

I didn't understand how you could do this to me.

I really didn't deserve this.

Just one more chance was all I asked

Suddenly there were tears everywhere...

Running down my face.

Nothing was able to stop it,

because I realized that you had left like the rain...

without a single word....

I could not believe this could happen.

I wondered why I had taken that decision of leaving her for a few days.

Life changed. Relationship changed.

And now I was facing changing relations....

I told Neha about all this. Amit was ignoring her completely. She could not believe what I was saying. She was blank. She was totally out of her mind. The way she reacted brought tears in my eyes too.

“Are you serious? How can Amit do like this?” she cried. “Your Amit is a bastard. Tell him to fuck off.” I was angry. “Please Aadi. Stop saying this. I will make him understand.”

“Now there is no use. They have gone too far in their relationship. But still I wanted my Riya back. He couldn’t fool her.”

“What do you mean by saying they have gone too far in their relationship? Are you insane? What are you saying?” she cried more.

“They slept. They were together the entire day and then at his place.” She kept the phone down.

I knew how it felt to hear this. She heard from me. I heard from my girlfriend.

After a few hours she called me back.

“Can you come to Aerol? I will talk to Amit. We will meet him. Please come. I can’t live like this.” She was depressed.

I agreed. Even I wanted to talk with Amit. I had so many questions in my mind. I told Neha to call him while I was on the way. I told her to keep the call on conference. I wanted to hear what they spoke. I wanted to hear what was in his mind. She also agreed to keep the call on conference.

I took my Activa and left for Aerol. I was wearing a headset. Neha called me. “Have you left?”

I told her to call him and not to tell him about conference. I told her to say that she was travelling and the disturbance was coming from outside. She called Amit.

Amit: Why have you called? I am busy. Call me later.

Neha: Please Amit. I want to talk to you. Aditya told me everything that is going on between you and Riya. Why did you do this?

Amit: I didn’t do anything. Got it. You deserve it. You didn’t give anything that I wanted. Riya is keeping me happy. She is a darling.

Neha: I loved you so much. Aditya loves Riya so much. Why did you have to propose to her?

Amit: Please don’t tell me that you loved me. You never did love me. As for Aditya I don’t care. He could not handle such a darling. Now she is mine.

I was not able to hear all this. But I had to. I wanted to know what was in his mind. I reached the Eastern Express highway. Their conversation continued.

Neha: What made you feel that way? I really loved you.

Amit: You didn't. You never even allowed me to kiss you. Forget about other things. You never had trust in me. Leave it.

Neha: So Riya is giving you everything. Does it mean she loves you? Where is Aditya in this picture? Is he nothing for her?

Amit: No, he is nothing. He is past. I am her present and future. He has never been loyal to her. He slept with someone else and he didn't tell her about it. This is not right.

Neha: Are you doing something different? You also didn't tell me. You can never love anyone. I know it now.

Amit: You don't have to teach me what is right and what is wrong. You want to hear the truth. Then hear. But you can never prove it.

Neha: What do you want to say?

Amit: I am with Riya for a physical relationship. I don't love her. But if she gives me what you didn't then I can live with her for a long time. I will keep her happy.

I lost my senses. I knew she was fooling my Riya. Who will make Riya understand? I was losing my mind.

Neha: You are a bastard. Why are you doing this? I love you Amit. I can't live without you. Please Amit please. Please come back to me. I will give you whatever you want. But please don't leave me.

Amit: Sorry, now I won't. I have got a better shape than you. She is so hot. You get lost now. I will give her what Aditya could not give.

I interrupted their conversation. I could not control myself.

ME: ma\*\*\*\*\*, don't you feel any guilt. You are talking about your friend's girlfriend.

Amit: Aditya, were you in conference? I will kill you Neha. Hate you. Aditya, you just shut up. You just leave Riya and me alone. She is my girlfriend now. You could not give her the pleasure that I can.

ME: Bastard, some relationships are more than that. And you are fooling my Riya. You used her emotions and played with her when I was not here. I never thought you could do this.

Amit: Bloody loser. You slept with someone else and are now telling me to stop doing so. I will sleep with her.

I could not stop my tears when I was listening to all this. I was driving full speed. I wanted to reach Aerol as soon as possible. I wanted to tell Riya that this man was fooling her. I wanted to stop Riya from going further. She was unaware of this fact. She was too sweet. She must be thinking Amit loved her. But he just wanted her on his bed. I wanted to convince Riya. Amit continued speaking.

Amit: Let me tell you Aditya, the black spot on her back is really sexy. It feels so good to kiss her there.

I could not control myself. I wanted to hit him hard. I lost control over my bike. I tried to control. I tried to apply brakes. But I could not.....

There was a crowd surrounding me. Thank god I had slowed down. My leg was bleeding. My hand was bleeding. It was paining badly. But the injuries were not serious. My headset was lost. People around me gave me water and I was alright in few minutes. Legs and hand were still <sup>bleeding</sup>. I wanted to meet all of them desperately. I somehow sat on my <sup>my</sup> Activa again stretching my legs. I started driving again. It was hurting. But it didn't hurt as much as my heart did. I reached Aerol.

Riya saw me bleeding. She was with Neha and Amit. She came running towards me. I was parking my Activa. She started crying looking at my condition. She asked me what had happened and shouted at me to drive bike slowly. For one minute I thought my Riya was back. For a few minutes I thought she is back with me. But it was just a few minutes. She controlled herself. She had not forgotten me completely. She still loved me. But was afraid. She loved Amit too. What was this? Maybe she didn't love me anymore. My feelings for her made me think so.

All 4 friends faced each other. With relationships changed..... Amit was not a friend anymore. Riya was not my girlfriend anymore. Neha was not Amit's girlfriend anymore. Neha was frank with me for the last few days. Amit and Riya were in a relationship. Neha and Riya were no longer friends.

Relationships had changed.....

Neha and Amit went together. I was with Riya. She didn't even look into my eyes.

“What happened bachha. Did I hurt you so much that you left me and accepted Amit in your life?”

She didn't say anything. She had tears in her eyes.

“Jaan please don't cry. I still can't see tears in your eyes. I still love you in the same way as I used to. Please say something jaan. Was I not worth of you?”

“It's not like that Aadi. But you took me for granted. I loved you even more than my life. But our relationship was getting worse. There was no point being together.” She said.

“I love you jaan. I can’t live without you now. Even my parents know about you. Please don’t behave like this. I will change. Give me one more chance. I promise” I almost cried.

“You can never be my Aadi.” She took my hand in her hand to see how much blood was coming out. She wiped it off with her napkin.

“You forgot everything that happened between us? 7 promises, my birthday, everything. You don’t love me anymore?” I was staring at her eyes.

“Aadi I care for you. I can’t see you like this. Please be normal and happy. I want you to smile.”

“Great. How can I smile when you are with someone else? You were the smile on my face. I will miss all those things. Please come back. Please.” I pleaded.

“I can’t Aadi. I can’t. I can never trust you. I can’t break Amit’s trust now. But I want you to smile. I want you to take care of yourself. I want you to eat properly. Don’t misbehave with your mom. Do your studies well. Please try to forget me. I am not saying I won’t talk to you. But please don’t make me cry by your sad face. I can’t see my sweet little bachha crying. I want him to enjoy life. You will always be special to me. The days which we spent together. The days when we enjoyed ourselves together. The days when you gave me all special moments. But I can’t live with you. Please forgive me. Take care. I will always miss you.” she cried.

“How can I do all these things without you jaan? Please come back. I can’t handle this. I don’t want to. Give me one chance. Please.”

She was going away. She didn’t listen to me. She was ignoring me. My heart was bleeding. I was watching my love going away from me and I could do nothing. Nothing at all. This made me more depressed. I wanted her. I could not handle my life without her. I was used to her. I loved her

Neha was also crying. Even Amit was firm on his decision to break up with Neha. I didn’t talk to him. The things which he had said me were still in my mind. I could have told Riya about it. But it would have made the situation worse. She was totally under his influence. She would never have listened to me at that moment. Amit smiled at me. He caught Riya’s hand and went away.

“Aadi, please stop them. Please. I can’t see them together. I can’t face all this” Neha kept on crying.

I did not say anything. My hand was bleeding. My legs were bleeding. My heart was bleeding. I wondered how I was still alive.

*Now I understood some love stories really cannot be predicted.*

## **ALL ALONE IN COLLEGE.**

We had a lot of fun, when we were together, I can never forget those days. I will always remember her presence in college. The laughs that we shared, the dreams that we had, but those dreams changed, and it left a hole in my heart. I knew she had moved on in her life. She had got someone better than me. But I still wish she was with me. I still wish she cared for me. I was all alone in the college. I missed her everywhere. I stopped going to the canteen. Whenever I went there I could see that table where we used to sit. Where we sang songs together. I stopped listening to that song. It made me cry more. It was difficult to face anyone. I wanted to avoid everyone. Having lunch alone made me love her more. I could see her in college. She was not the same Riya. She talked with me. But she was not the same Riya.

I somehow attended lectures as P.L was hardly a week away. Everything seemed to be different. I was missing her badly. I was regretting my decision. Now I realised what love was. Even if she was with someone else I loved her. In fact I loved her more than before. I realised love had no limits. I realised what I used to watch and hear. Break up always made you love your ex girlfriend more. I was facing the same... Swapnil, Sameer and Anup came to me. I was ignoring them for the last few days. I was not in mood to face the world. They asked me what my problem was...

“Riya broke up with me. She left me all alone. I think I don’t deserve her. But still I love her. I love her very much. I want her back in my life.”

“What happened? Why did she leave you? You must have done something. Don’t worry she will come back to you.” Swapnil said.

“She won’t come back to me. She has a new boyfriend now.” tears rolled down again as I said this.

“Are you silly? What are you saying? She can’t do like this. She loves you so much. You both love each other so much. You are a perfect couple. So stop saying negative things.” Sameer said.

“I am serious. I know it. She is with Amit now. I hope you remember him.”

“What are you saying? I can’t believe this. But how? Why? What about Neha? Shall I talk to her?”  
“Swapnil was surprised.

I didn't answer any questions. I just went away. I was upset. I was fed up with all these questions. I went to class. She was not with me. She was sitting on some other bench. I felt frustrated.

As the class was over she talked with me for a few minutes. But she got a call from Amit I think. She picked up the call and left. I was alone again. The feeling of loneliness was killing me. I wanted to end all these things. I wanted to talk to her. I messaged her...

"Can we talk tonight? I am missing you. Please jaan."

She replied...

"Ok. Call me at 11pm."

There were no sweet words in the message. It was a normal message. I missed everything. I was waiting for 11pm. I was eager to talk to her.

I called her at 11pm.

The number you are trying to call is busy. I tried again. Same response. She didn't attend my call. I called Amit. Even his call was busy. She was talking to him. I was not able to accept it. I called Neha. She was also trying Amit' number.

"Aadi, it's all over. I don't think Amit will come back to me. He doesn't even reply to me now. Riya at least replies to you. Talks to you. He is avoiding me completely. I am broken. Please do something."

"What can I do? I am in the same boat. Even I want my Riya back. Even I want to feel her love. But I am helpless. I am trying my level best to bring her back. I am going to ask her to come with me tomorrow." I said.

"Do you think she will come with you? I don't think so. They have forgotten us." She replied.

"Please don't say this. I won't let her go so easily." I called her once again. Still her cell was busy. I sent her a message that it was urgent to talk to her. She didn't reply.

I was waiting for her call till 3am. Then I realised what she must have felt when I had ignored her on that day. I was crying. I just could hear her busy ringtone. It was killing me. Finally she called me...

"What was so urgent that you were calling me again and again? Don't you understand I was on call? Now say what you want to say." She was angry.

"Jaan, I was missing you. I wanted to meet you. I really love you jaan. Please forgive me. Please. Come back." I cried.

"Is this you wanted to tell me? Is it urgent?"

"No. I wanted to ask you if we could go out tomorrow for the whole day?" I knew she would not agree to it.

“No. I have work tomorrow at home. I can come day after tomorrow.”

As she said this I smiled. It's so beautiful when you give a small smile when you are crying.

“Ok jaan. No problem. I will be waiting for the day after tomorrow. I saw the date. This could not be a miracle. I really thought God has decided it. It was 11th October. Her birthday. It had completely gone slipped from my mind due to recent incidents and whatever was happening. I messaged her..

*Your birthday will be special. Full of surprises ....miss you.*

## **Changing Relations...**

This was the day. I wanted to make her realise what she meant to me. I wanted to make her realise that I could love her the most. I wanted to relive the moments of my birthday. With the same surprises and a few more. I knew if today she realised how much I loved her she would never go back to Amit.

We were going to Chowpatty. I could have taken her to Grant lane but I was afraid as she had been with Amit in Grant lane a few days back. We boarded the train. I took out the first surprise from the bag.

“ A white rose to clear the fights between us.” I gave her the rose.

She accepted it. But there was no reaction on her face.

“ Thanks but....” I stopped her from saying anything else.

Maybe I knew what she was going to say. She was not the same Riya. She was looking out of the window and I was looking at her. I took out the second rose for her after some time.

“A yellow rose for our friendship. Friendship that we once shared. We can still share the same relationship.” I said

“ I don' think we can be what we were. Time changes each second. Still thanks again.” She gave me a small smile.

I was losing my temper. But I didn't want to fight. I kept cool. As we got down and sat in the autorickshaw

I took out the 3rd surprise for her. It was a letter. I had written it personally for her.

*I remember the days when we were together. I remember the days when we met. The first time I saw you I was in love. We came together. I loved the way you took care of me. I loved the way you called me bachha. I loved the way you smiled at me. I loved the way you kissed me. I loved the way you looked at me. There is nothing in you which I hate. Nothing at all. If there is something that I hate , then it's my fault. You could never be wrong. I love you more than myself. I am sorry. I am sorry and I am sorry. I want to live those moments again with you. I want to propose to you again.*

*You are ..... sorry I can't explain in words. Whatever you did for me in the last one year I cant forget. Whatever you did with me in the last few days I am ready to forget it. Please jaan can we be the same Aditya and Riya who used to be the famous couple in our colony, in our college and among our friends. Can we be together again? I am ready to accept all your faults and change all my faults. But please don't go away. I can't see you with anyone else. Love you a lot...*

*Yours Aditya.....*

She had tears in her eyes. She kept the letter with her. I was happy to see tears in her eyes. It meant she still had some feeling for me. It was not over yet. I tried to hold her hand. She didn't allow me. I was upset by her reaction. Still I smiled at her. I was pampering her continuously. Trying to make her smile and enjoy each moment. It was not happening though.

“Jaan, are you happy with whatever decision you have taken. Do you really think Amit can keep you happy? Do you feel he loves you?” I asked her.

“ Yes, he loves me. He really does. And please avoid that topic.” She seemed to be irritated.

“ How can you say he loves you? If he can betray Neha , he can betray you too.” I said

“ I don't care what he did with Neha. Now he is with me and we love each other. I am with you because I care for you. Nothing else. So please don't call me by pet names. I am in a relationship. It dosent look good.”

This was too much. Now I cannot call my Riya by her pet name also. She used to call me bachha. Now what? Everything I was doing was giving me a negative result. We reached Chowpatty. We were sitting on the sea shore looking at the waves. I was making her recollect all those moments that we spent together. She had tears in her eyes. I gave her another surprise. It was another letter.

*I want todays day to be special. I want your birthday the same way we had my birthday. These days I am all quiet. I am facing the worst days of my life. Still today I want you and me together. I want to give you smile and tears. I want you to feel me. You gave me a shock of my life but I didn't say a word. I knew something was wrong. But I didn't say a word.*

*When you told me you went on a ride with him, I should have told you it was wrong. When you told me you and he slept together. I should have asked how could you? But I didn't say a word.*

*How could I sit back and watch your world be destroyed?*

*He is playing with you. But you can't understand.*

*You won't admit it. I got what I wished for but also lost what I had. I know you won't admit it but it was all true.*

*That burning desire to touch your skin won't go away.*

*Maybe you will just kiss me again, and pretend you like me, you may pretend you want me again. But I don't want you to pretend. All I want is you should wake up from the world he is showing you before it's too late.*

*Or there is one option. Would that be better for you?*

*I can pretend that I don't cry for you the whole day?*

*we can pretend we never loved each other and we both used each other for physical needs..*

*In reality there will always be that throbbing pain in our hearts.*

*And we'll never admit it's there, because we won't.*

*We can pretend that you were nothing in my life. We can also pretend every small promise was a fake. Is this a good option for you? Another option is we can stop pretending and come back together because we know we neither used each other nor we wanted each other for physical needs. We loved each other like crazy. We cared for each other like crazy. Please think over it jaan. I want you to be my Riya. My mom wants you to be mine. When everybody is with us why do you want to go against the world to just fall down from a cliff. There is no life there. Trust me.*

She cried badly after reading this. I pulled her close to me. She rested her head on my shoulders. I thought I had got my Riya back. But still she was not mine. She removed her head from my shoulder and said sorry. I was helpless. I could not do anything.

We had so much love and passion for each other. Now it's all gone and I feel so sad. We had made so many promises that turned into lies.

It hurts to hear or see that she is in another relationship. She just cares for me that's all. I knew it was too fast. As our relationship grew we went away from each other. Then I realised what you meant for me. I really wonder now if you will ever call me 'my sweet little bachha'. Somewhere I know you won't but still I wish you could come back and realise I am your only bachha.

We were walking on the beach. The sun was about to set. I wanted to let her feel the moment. I took her near the water where the waves flattered out. I told her to look at the sun. I told her to stand on my legs. We both removed our shoes. She was standing on my feet facing the sun. I was behing her holding her hands. I told her to watch the sun.

"It's too far. Still we can see it so clearly. It's such a romantic sky, all orange, still we cant feel the romance. I want you to close your eyes. I want you to feel we are in each others arms." I said

She closed her eyes.

"We are hugging each other on the sea shore. We are married. We are living a happy life. I ask you how many children you want. You are smiling as if a new bride. I could see the naughtiness in your eyes. Tell me Riya. How many children do you want...."

She didn't answer. She was quiet. She opened her eyes and turned towards me. She had tears in her eyes. Even I had tears in my eyes. I knew she was imagining the 7 promises that we had made to each other.

She hugged me. I could feel my Riya who never cared about the public. Who never gave a single thought of what people around us would think.

“Why Aadi...? Why did you take that decision. It still hurts. It still hurts badly. Now I can't do anything. When I loved you more than my life you didn't care. Now when I am with someone else you have realised my love. It's too late Aadi. I can't come back now. I just care for you. You are still my bachha. But I can't come back now.” She left my hands.

“ Why jaan? We can still be together. Amit does not love you. He is with you just for cheap reasons. He himself told me all this. Please jaan realise before it's too late. I still love you the same. I am ready to accept you as you are. But I can't let you go. I still wonder why did I let you go? Come back Riya. Please.

It was time to relive the moments. I went on my knees with a red rose. Everyone around was watching us with a weird look.

I ignored them

*“ I love you. I still love you the way I used to when we had met. I can still sing the same song.... But today I want to sing something different. Just two lines. Then it's upto you.*

*Ruth ke hamse kabhi jab chale jaaoge tum....*

*Kisne socha tha kabhi....*

*Itne yaad aaoge tum.....*

*Please jaan. I am sorry. Will you marry me?”*

She didn't react. She was crying. But she didn't react. She didn't accept my rose. She started walking away. I was still on my knees. I was watching her go. I got up and went towards her. I tried to convince her. But she didn't agree. We didn't share a single word. There was silence. We sat in an autorickshaw to come back to Aerol.

I gave her the final letter of the day.

*The sweet memories are fading. It is getting harder to remember when you smiled for me the last time. Those memories of love are fading. Your smiling face is becoming blur in my mind. So you really don't love me anymore? Or is it something in you that is stopping you?*

*Your words are fading into silence. I can't remember the last time we kissed. It's been so long.*

*Please understand I'm not forgetting on purpose, it pains me to even not to remember. But it feels like it had been decades the last time we made love with each other. Please don't cry while reading this. Please bachha stop crying. If there is nothing in your heart for me why are these tears about to flow? You should stop them too.*

*Because these sweet memories are fading*

*Would you forgive me if I told you I can't remember the day you said you love me? It's not my mistake this time. I seriously don't remember the last time you had played with my hair. The last time you played with my eyes. The last time you held my hands tightly. The last time you were so close to me*

*that we seemed one. The last time when you had sung a song for me. Today it hurts when I think of all those things. Today I have deleted that song from my memory. It only hurts. Please tell me what is stopping you? Is everything really over or is it a nightmare? All I know and all I can feel is that these sweet memories are fading away.*

*And so are you.*

She hugged me. We were both crying. I then realised she couldn't be mine. I could feel that from her touch. Something was missing. Infact everything was missing. Was it my mistake or was it hers? All I knew was she was getting fooled by Amit. I was helpless. I could have hit him. But I didn't want to. It would have increased the distance between Riya and me.

It was the same day as it was on my birthday. But times had changed. Relationships had changed. Love had disappeared.

We reached home. I called Swapnil , Sameer and Anup. I told them whatever had happened. They agreed to convince Riya to come back.

## **BREAK UP INDEED...**

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This was my last chance. If I could not get her now I would have to forget her which I didn't want to. I requested all my friends to do something and brainwash her. I could not see her falling in trap of someone. We decided to meet in Aerol. I was scared at the outcome of this meet. My life was moving towards a dead end or would I make my way out to get her back. I was thinking all the way.

We all were waiting for Riya near the college. We had planned to meet Neha also. Riya came near the college. She ignored me completely. She didn't even look at me. She was talking to Swapnil . We went into a restaurant. I didn't order anything. I was tensed. Swapnil began with what he was there for.

“ What happened Riya. Why you have changed suddenly? Did Aditya trouble you? You can tell us everything frankly.”

“ I did not change suddenly. It took me a long time to take this decision. Your friend Aditya changed suddenly. You can ask him. I don't need to say anything.” Riya looked at me.

“ I know Aditya changed. He took a wrong decision. I slapped him for that. But he has realised his mistake. You both loved each other so much. Can't you forgive him?” Swapnil said.

“ Look Riya, somewhere everyone makes a mistake. Even Aditya did. But it doesn't mean you will go with someone else. We have come to know the real character of Amit.” Sameer added. Anup agreed with it.

“ I don't know what the real picture is. I have known Amit for a few days. I know him personally. He really loved Neha but Neha didn't care for him at all. I don't say I never loved Aditya. I cared for him like a mother. I treated him as my child. But he took me for granted. He started avoiding me. I could have tolerated that. But what about Muskaan? He never told me about her. He just told me about his girlfriend. Nothing else. Why did he have to lie to me?” Riya said.

“ I didn't lie to you. That mail was before we were in a relationship. I never open my drafts. I didn't want to hurt you. If I was playing with you then why I would keep that mail. Just think.” I said almost crying.

“ I don't know anything Aditya but now it's not possible to be together. Please forget me.” She said angrily.

Swapnil took her outside. I was tensed. Sameer and Anup calmed me down. I was worried as to what was going to happen. They came inside after a few minutes. We had finished our snacks till then. Swapnil paid the bill and was about to leave.

“ Swapnil ,what is happening. Please can you tell me. Please. Did she agree?” I asked him curiously. “It's all over Aditya. Now she won't listen. You will have to pay for your 1 decision. She doesn't love you anymore. Get on with your life. At least be happy that she is talking to you.”

I could not speak a word. Riya left. Swapnil called Neha to come near the bus depot. She seemed to be normal when she came. I was surprised.

Sameer asked her “What have you decided. Aadi can't let her go. He wants her back after knowing everything. What is your reaction?”

She smiled.

“Nothing. I don't expect anything. I don't know about Riya. But Amit wouldn't come back for sure. He wouldn't talk to me. I don't want to get into all this. Exams are coming. Seriously I don't care about all this now. I am over it. Amit is a bastard and Riya is his bitch. Let them sleep or fuck. I don't care.”

I slapped Neha. I should not have done that. But I had to. I could not control myself after what she said.

“What are you saying? I am sorry to hit you. But you said something horrible. What do you mean by let them fuck? I will kill you and Amit both. If you don't love him I don't care. I love Riya and always will. I can't hear anything bad about her. Get lost.”

I was surprised by this side of Neha's nature. I had heard girls recover easily after break up. But it did not hold true for every girl. Neha was not one of them. She was over with the break up. Maybe she never loved him. Who cared. I loved Riya.

Without talking to anyone I left. It was all over. It was difficult to decide whether I should be happy that she was still in contact with me or I should be upset that she had left;breaking all the promises. I reached home. As I got down from Aactiva I had a message on my cell. It was Riya.

“ Swapnil tried to convince me. It was the worst part. You should have done something. I know you tried. But it was too late. Telling Swapnil to convince me was the worst part. If you could not handle a relationship why did you bring everyone ahead to explain to me. I had told you my decision. I don't love you. And from now onwards I won't even talk to you. I am changing my number today. So don't try to contact me ever. Forget me. I will never forget the days which we spent together. Take care of yourself. And be serious about life. Miss you always as a friend. Bye forever.”

I called her immediately. She did not pick up. I messaged her. she did not reply. I called her several times but there was no response. I called Amit finally. He was not ready to speak to me.

“Amit, even I don't want to talk to you. But please can you tell me what is wrong with Riya now? She messaged me that she didn't want to talk to me and she is changing her number. What is happening?”

“How could I know why she is changing her number. Maybe because she loves me a lot.” Amit laughed.

“ What does that mean. Please care to explain” I raised my voice.

“ I told her to not to keep any contact with you. I told her not to message you or call you or even speak to you. She loves me too much. She accepted it and maybe that is the reason she is changing her number. She is so sweet. And her black spot. I kissed her twice there.”

I kept the phone down. Everything was over. I could not hear what Amit was saying. Before he could say anything more I kept the phone down. I went upstairs. I went to my bedroom. I closed the door.

I SENT HER A MESSAGE.....MESSAGE WHICH COMMUNICATED THE END OF EVERYTHING.....

*Its ok. Forget me. Forget my memories. Forget the moments I spent with you. Forget the time I came to meet you without even thinking even once. Forget the promises that we made together. Forget my face. Forget my touch. Forget the time we kissed..Loved each other or maybe I can say pretended to love each other. Forget my voice. Forget my care. Forget my craziness for you. Forget the conversation between us. Forget my family. Forget the day at my house. Forget the way I proposed to you. Forget each day we spent together. Forget the time we fought. Forget the time we patched up.Forget my belongings with you. Throw it away. Forget my name. Forget my number. Delete it from your phone. Delete me from your life. Forget me forever. This time forget seriously. Good bye. Stay happily with Amit. I will never come along your way. The chapter of Riya had been closed and deleted from my life. I will always love you. I will always miss you. I will always keep your gifts with me. Yours and only yours. But you were never mine.....*

Whatever the reason, it was enough for me to conclude that breaking up was the only thing left. It was not easy for me to send that message leaving behind everything, but I had to. No other option was left. I felt sad for Riya. She was trapped. But I knew she would realise someday. I also knew she wouldn't ever be back. This was the sad end. But if it had to be this way, I was ready for it. At least I was ready to show I was ok with it. But somewhere it hurt.

IT WAS THE END OF EVERYTHING

## WORST DAYS OF MY LIFE

**E**xam came. I didn't study at all. I was screwing up everything. I was making my life hell. I was not able to concentrate on anything. Everybody explained to me. I did not listen to anyone. My mom was unaware of all these things. I did not want to hurt her. It was the end of life maybe. I was just living for the sake of it. Exams came and went. I did not sit for 2 papers. The reason was weird. I bunked two university papers of 3rd semester. Riya was in the same class as me. She had the same exam hall. I left the hall and went away. I bunked electrical networks and maths 2. I didn't care. All vacations went spending time alone. I did not want to meet anyone. Sameer was with me. I lost contact with Neha. I didn't know where she was.

What was happening in her life. I lost contact with Riya. It hurt me the most. My heart still skipped a beat when I heard her name or saw her in college.

After 15 days, the exam results were displayed. I went all alone this time to see my result. I avoided Anup and Swapnil . They were in I.T and used to talk with Riya. Our group was broken. Everything changed. Sameer was with me. My only friend. He was not with me in college though. He had a drop.

I checked my result. It was not surprising. 3 kt.

Maths2 , maths3, and electrical networks....

I checked Riya's result. She had 2 kt. I checked Neha's result. She had cleared. She never cared though. Everything changed. I didn't know what Amit's result was. He was in a different college. Neha was a closed chapter. Swapnil and Anup were no longer with me. Infact I decided to go away from them. Riya and Amit was a closed chapter for me. But it was a new chapter in their life.

I had started screwing engineering. I had started screwing my life.

Today after 3rd semester no one was with me. It was just Sameer and me.....

It was the beginning of the 4th semester. The day you left, I swore I'd never talk to you again. But that was just a wounded little boy in me talking. As I move on I remembered all the times we had spent together. It was terrible facing the world without you. I could not concentrate in college. Each classroom gave me the feel of you being with me. Every moment was difficult to me. It was impossible to face the college like this. It was like a moon facing the sun when it's emitting maximum light. I tried to avoid every place in college where we had been together. But there was no place like this. I started avoiding college itself. Each day I screwed up my life more and more. I was aware of it but I could not help it.

“Aadi, please concentrate on studies. You have a golden paper and kt also. At least attend lectures. Else you will have problem in submission,” Sameer said.

“I couldn't face it. Whenever I went in college I felt like crying. Whenever I saw her in college I felt like talking to her. I know I couldn't talk to her. I couldn't talk to her anymore. I had to admit that I couldn't get Riya back in my life but that made me love her more. I was not supposed to love her, care for her. I should not be in the hope that she would come back. I was not supposed to wonder what Riya was doing and where she was, but I could not help it because I was in love with her. Even today I loved her. I seriously didn't know what was it in her that made me go mad.” I could have continued talking but Sameer stopped me.

When I saw her I just wanted her on the bed. As days passed I realised how much I liked her. I realised I loved her. But it was too late. I got everything that I wanted. Then why did I have to challenge my destiny and end up landing nowhere. Today when I was alone I thought I should not have taken admission in engineering. I would not have met her. I really wish I had not have liked her. Today I would not have missed her. These were the worst days of my life.

I was missing my friends too. I had stopped talking to them because of Riya. It hurted me more. Sameer was there with me always. Today also he was with me. Sameer and I decided to go to Lonavala. I was ready to bunk college. We decided to go in the morning and come by late evening. I took 2 packets of cigarettes with me. I was continuously smoking all the way on the bike.

“What is wrong with you? This is your eighth cigarette and we haven't reached Lonavela yet. Still 30 minutes to go.” Sameer shouted at me.

“Let it be. Now no one can stop me. I can live my life as I want. I am fed up with these tears. I will not cry for her anymore. From now this cigarette is my girlfriend and I trust her. She can never leave me.” I smoked another cigarette.

Sameer started driving the bike again. We reached Lonavela.

Sitting near the dam we opened our 1st can of beer. I was thinking about Riya. I was wondering whether she had really loved me. If she had why did she leave me. And today if she left me then why was I still thinking of her even when I was 100km away from her. All questions remained unanswered. Few things are always left unsaid.

“Sameer, what can you say about my relationship?” I asked him

“I didn’t get you. What you want to know?”

“Do you really think Riya loved me? Or what you think I love her? What exactly is happening?”

I was losing my senses again as I had the 2nd can of beer.

“Of course Riya loved you. No doubt about that. She loved you more than you did. You never understood her. I know what she did is wrong but it had to end like this. She will understand some day that whatever she did is wrong.”

It was the second time I was drinking beer. I liked it this time. My nerves stopped supporting my physical state. The 2nd can was finished. I stopped drinking.

“I really want to curse Riya. She betrayed me. I want her life to be....” Sameer stopped me.

“Let me speak. You don’t know what I am facing. I want tell the whole world what we did. I will make her life...” Sameer again stopped me.

“Stop it Aadi. Why are you cursing her? What will you get from it? You love her today also. Then why all these things?”

I closed my eyes and slept for sometime. We returned by 8pm. This was the day when my life took me in a direction, which had a dead end. I started smoking regularly. I should say I started smoking every hour. A chain smoker. Moreover, a highly rated drinker. I never realised how it started and how I got used to it. However, I started drinking regularly. Almost daily. I had stopped attending lectures regularly.

Sameer had some work in college regarding his rechecking result. We went to the college together. Everyone who knew me was looking at me strangely. I could not understand the reason behind it. We went near the office. I saw Riya there coming with Amit. Amit was holding her hand. She was not looking normal. She was walking as if she had hurt her leg. As she came near I could see she was holding her stomach. Amit was supporting her. I left the office and went to the quadrangle.

“Hey where were you Aditya? I hope you know Riya had an operation” A guy from my class told me.

“What operation? What for?” I asked.

“She had an abortion.” He went away saying this. I wanted to ask him how he knew about it.

My world shattered when I heard this. I looked at Sameer. He could not look in my eyes. How? When? Why? Is it true? If then from whom? Amit or me? It’s been long she has been touch with me. How could it be me? Amit? Still she is with him? How can Riya do this? I don’t believe. Riya could never do this. She is smart enough to take care of herself. I wanted answers to all the questions.

I called her. She had changed her number. I called Amit. Even he had changed his number. I took her number from Swapnil and called her. I told her to meet me after 1 hour. She agreed and we decided to meet in college.

She still could not walk properly. I did not show any reaction even if I was going to talk to her after a long time. I wanted answers to all questions. She looked upset.

“What happened to you? Is it true what I have heard? You had an operation.” I asked her.

“Yes. I had an operation 3 days back. I had messaged you on orkut. Didn’t you check it? I missed you when I was about to enter the operation theatre. I wanted you to be there” she had tears in her eyes.

What was happening? I was not able to understand anything. She had admitted that she had an operation. I could not believe my ears. I was in tears. How could Riya do this? But she said she missed me. Did she mean that it was my child? She killed my child? But how could it be? I could not believe it. I was shocked.

“Why did you have an operation?” my heartbeats increased.

“Operation for appendicitis. It’s still paining.” She said.

Oh my God! I was relieved. She did not have an abortion. I would have died if it had been true. I calmed down. I was really happy and I left saying bye to her. I still don’t know why she missed me then when she had Amit with her. I didn’t care. I wanted to stop the rumours, which were spreading in college. Riya was clean. I knew it. However, I feared. I trusted her but not Amit. I told everyone whom I could that why she had an operation. I shut the people’s mouth by telling them the real reason. I hit a few classmates who still had a doubt. They didn’t speak a word after that. I was relaxed to hear that the abortion rumours were just rumours. I would have killed myself if it were true. But it wasn’t. I knew my Riya couldn’t do anything silly. But I soon realised Riya was not mine anymore.

I went to a wine shop and bought 2 beer cans. Sameer joined me. He did not drink much. But he gave me company. Even I didn’t know why I was drinking. Was it because Riya did not have an abortion or was it because Riya was not mine...

“I am happy Sameer. Riya did not have an abortion. I would have died if it was true. Cheers. Cheers as I am happy. Or maybe still I love her. She missed me while she had an operation. She cried.”

“If she comes to know that you are drinking so much and smoking too, what will she feel? She won’t accept you.” Sameer said.

“She won’t accept me anyways. Forget it. Let’s enjoy ourselves.”

Mom used to ask me about Riya several times but I ignored her words. I did not want to spoil her image in front my parents. I still loved her. Mom used to call Riya but she had changed her number. She somewhat got the hint that we had a break up. But she never said anything about it

# SHATTERED DREAMS

My life style had changed. My behaviour had changed. My likes and dislikes had changed. I almost stopped attending college. Cigarette and beer were my likes and girls and studies became my dislikes. I never wanted to curse Riya. But I did. Whether it was in a conscious state or otherwise, what mattered was that I cursed her. I cursed her family, her family business and her life. Today I feel bad about it.

Final defaulter list of 4th semester was displayed. I searched my name in it. My attendance was 52% in all subjects. My attendance for ECAD 2 which Shinde sir taught was 45%.

I went along with all defaulter students to the head of department. There were almost 25 students. But 5 students were in limelight along with me. Only 5 students were told to wait, along with me.

“I think you people are not interested in engineering. It’s ok. Now do one thing. Bring your parents and then do your submission. Else you won’t be allowed to do submissions.”

He warned us to bring our parents. If I tell them about this I would be killed. I thought of arranging parents from some where. This was the first time. I was not aware of all these things. I asked one of my classmate about this. He said he knew someone could pretend to be my dad without taking any money. This was the last option. I thought of convincing h.o.d first. I went to him again.

“I am sorry sir. I won’t repeat it. I will attend lectures regularly next year. I was not well for a few days that is why my attendance is low. Please forgive me sir.” I tried to convince him.

“I don’t want to hear anything. You just need excuses for not attending lectures. I won’t entertain your submission until you bring your parents. Now you can leave. Bring your parents.”

“Sir my parents are busy. Can I make you talk with them on phone? Please sir.” I again tried to convince her.

“No. Don’t give me all that crap. Each and every parent has time for his child. So bring them. Else don’t do submission this year. Take leave for 1 year and then come back.” He shouted at me.

I left. There was no option left. I decided to bring that uncle as my dad. It involved a lot of risk. If the staff realised that, I could be detained and not allowed to sit for exams this year. Still I took the risk.

I met that uncle. I explained him everything about my dad’s work and about me. He rehearsed in front of me. I also asked Sameer to come as my elder brother. No one in the staff knew him as he had dropped. Moreover, he was in the civil department. I explained the situation to him. He was ready for it. After preparing everything we reached college. I was scared. Still I gathered courage and went to the cabin of the head of department. Everyone was standing there. I went in as my turn came.

“Sir my dad and my elder brother.” they were told to sit. I was standing. My heart was pumping rapidly.

“Do you know why you have been called here” hod asked my dad.

“Yes. Attendance problem. Actually he was medically unfit for few days. So his attendance might be low.” My ‘dad’ explained.

“I understand. But they had been warned earlier. This is the final defaulter list. He had been warned last month also.”

My so called dad looked at me and my so called brother also.

“Sir, he will study hard and won’t repeat it. I know he should have attended the lectures. Even I am doing engineering. I am in final year. Vivekanand College of engineering. I.T department.” Sameer said.

Why did he have to say I.T. department? It again flashed all my memories in my mind. I was scared.

“What project are you doing? What is your percentage?” The hod asked my so-called brother Sameer.

“I am doing project on mobile technology. GPRS. And my overall percentage is 58%” Sameer said.

I controlled my laughter somehow. It was difficult Still I controlled. Sameer getting 58% could be possible but Vivekanand College and mobile technology. This was funny.

“Learn something from your brother. You need to learn a lot. I am forgiving you this time. I don’t want you to repeat this mistake again. Write an undertaking and leave.”

I left. I went to Shinde sir because of whom my submission was delayed. He was not ready to accept my submission.

“Go and do submission of other subjects. I won’t take your submission this year. Get out.” He shouted.

I did not leave his cabin. I was standing there along with Sameer and that uncle.

“Sir, sorry. Please forgive me. It won’t happen again. Please sir.”

He took my file and wrote fail on it and threw it away. He warned me to get out of the cabin. No one could say anything. We went outside.

“Aadi, don’t worry. He will give you at least 10 marks. Minimum marks required. He won’t fail you. He is just scaring you. Don’t worry let’s leave. Hod has given permission. Shinde sir can’t do anything now.” Sameer said.

I accepted whatever he said. We left college. I ignored whatever happened. I smoked a cigarette and had a beer.

“Even if he fails he will give me kt in 1 subject. Who cares? Let him do what he wants.” I said

“I know. But you still study seriously. Exams are a few weeks away and you have vivas and practical this week.” Sameer said.

I thanked uncle for coming. Sameer dropped him near his house. I went home and tried studying. I was not interested at all.

Vivas were not that good. Good enough to get passing marks. The same with practical. I had to give 9 theory papers. I was not aware of the syllabus. I wanted to clear 5 subjects at least to avoid dropping a year. I started studying.

Beer in 1 hand and books in other. Cigarette in one hand and books in other. It helped me to concentrate leaving my past behind. It was difficult but still I tried hard. I gave my exams and was sure of clearing minimum subjects. That raised a can of beer again. I enjoyed the entire vacations with beer. There was no other activity left in my life.

## RESULTS DECLARED AFTER 2 WEEKS.

I went to college to see my results. I checked the result of the 3rd semester.

Electrical networks	45	passed.
Maths 3	53	passed.
Ecad 1	28	failed.

I came to know this must have done purposely. I was expecting to pass in ecad 1. But I somewhere knew Shinde sir would take revenge. I checked out marks of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester results.

Maths 4	40	passed
CSE	28	failed
Microprocessor	25	failed
pcom	40	passed
Ecad 2	25	failed
Dd2	44	passed

I got 4 kt. Saved from a drop....

I took a look at viva and practical and termwork marks.

I was passed except.....

Ecad 2 viva	8	failed.
Ecad 2 pracs	9	failed
Ecad 2 termwork	7	failed

4 kt in theory and 3 internal kt. 7 kt....

I was shocked. I would have to drop a year. I tried whatever I could. I cleared 5 theory subjects. However, Shinde sir had done it purposely. I could not say a word. It was all over.

My mind said...

*Experience the first drop in engineering. Congrats. I told you to attend lectures and not mess with Shinde sir. Now enjoy yourself.*

What can be worse than this? First, you land up doing engineering and then you get your love. Later you lose your love and now lose a year. Everyone was going away. I needed some one who could take care of me. If I tell this result at home I would be screwed. I went near I.T section. Their result had been displayed 2 days ago. I looked for Riya's result. She had 3 kt. But the important thing was she was eligible for third year. Neha had passed. All clear again.

I told Sameer about the result. He shouted at me as he had told me earlier to study.

I wanted Swapnil and Anup near me. I broke the friendship with them just to avoid Riya. Today I needed them but I didn't have them with me. I had lost my best friend, why? God help me

It's been almost 6 months since we spoke to each other. We did everything together...laughed and cried together. I didn't mean to be mean to them, things got out of control. I didn't want to say bye and I didn't even get the chance to. It's hard to admit the fact that they were gone and I was afraid to talk to them again. Maybe my ego stopped me.

I wished to see them right now. I wanted to apologise and have them back in my life. They had already moved on with their life, they had passed with good marks to get eligible to third year. If Riya had been with me today she would have told me to be strong and not worry. But she was not there.

How could one walk away from someone they loved? It had been more than 7 months now; still her memories were fresh in my mind. Still each and every moment between us was fresh in my mind.

I wanted to reroute the path I had taken. And start all over once again. I didn't want to forget her memories. I still remembered the time we had loved each other and the time when she left me. My life was at a standstill. She never looked back; I was still waiting for her.

My heart said she would come back but I should trust my mind. I remembered the times we shared all our happiness and tears. Sometimes we can't turn back to heal our wounds. We have to accept it and move ahead. Still I was at a standstill.

Today I prayed to God to give her all happiness but somewhere I felt she should realise that the life had been best with me.

Today the cigarette was my only friend and girlfriend. I could kiss her anytime I wanted. I could feel her anytime I wanted. I could sleep without kissing her. She didn't complain. Ashtrays were full during the nights. And the glass remained full during days.

"Sameer I am not going to tell my result at home so early. They will kill me." I said to Sameer sipping a beer.

“I think you should tell the result at home Aadi. Date of declaration of result is printed on mark sheet. They will get hurt if you hide it from them.” Sameer said

“I can’t tell so early. Infact I tried telling the result at home. But I was not able to. Even mom asked me twice. I ignored her question saying results were late. I don’t have courage to face them.” I replied.

All expectations and dreams were buried in the sand. I had the dream of getting placed in a good company and earning lots of money. Now that dream couldn’t be realized. I wanted my parents to be happy. That dream had also vanished... No son wants his parents to cry in front of him just because of a girl. But I could not forget her. She was more than a girl for me. I was guilty of deceiving my parents. I had the dream of scoring good marks in second year and convince my mom that Riya was the best for me. But that dream was saltered.

## HOPES IN VEIN

I still can’t understand how one can forget true love. I was trying hard to forget it. But couldn’t.

Today I think If I had not liked you, I would not have loved you. If I would not have loved you, I would not have missed you. But I did, I do and I will. I don’t run from you, I walk away slowly, and it kills me because you don’t care enough to stop me... I can’t talk to you anymore, it’s not that I am mad for you, it’s just that when I talk to you I realise how much I love you and when I realise how much I love you, I realise I can’t have you and that makes me love you even more. I am not supposed to love you, I am not supposed to care, and I am not supposed to live my life wishing you were there. I am not supposed to wonder where you are or what you are doing, but I cannot help it, because I am in love with you. There is this place in me where your finger tips still rest... your kisses still linger and your whispers echo softly ... It is the place where a part of you will forever be a part of me.

I was getting over all these thoughts slowly. I was trying to get over this relationship slowly. I could not cry all my life. I had to move on. I wanted to prove to everyone I couldn’t be a loser. I couldn’t fool myself and spoil my life rather I wanted to achieve something. I wanted to prove to myself that I still had the confidence that I used to have earlier. It was not easy for me. It involved lots of hard work. But I had the confidence.

Today on 9<sup>th</sup> September , it has almost been a year, since I knew where Riya was. I never tried to contact her. She never did too. But things changed a bit today. Today from my own earnings I have bought a bike for myself. Hero Honda Karizma. I was proud of myself that I did something productive.

When I was taking the delivery of the bike I was missing Riya a lot... I wanted to tell her about this. I wanted to tell her that I had bought a new bike. I wanted her to be the first person to sit on my bike. I wanted her beside me on this occasion. But it was impossible. I was missing the most special person of my life on this very special occasion in my life. My happiness would have doubled if Riya would have been with me. I sat on my bike along with my dad and went for the first ride. He was happy for obvious reason that his son had earned a bike. He had tears in his eyes. Even mom's eyes were wet. I felt proud at that moment. But somewhere I knew I was hiding the worst possible thing from them. Very soon I would have to tell them that I had dropped out. My dad hugged me.

It was an emotional moment. I would have been in seventh heaven if Riya had been beside me. For the first time in the last few months I was missing her very much. I thought the chapter of Riya was closed. I had forgotten her. However, everything flashed in front of my eyes today. I still loved her as before. I still remembered each and every moment with her. I wanted her back in my life. I couldn't live like this. Now that I had money, my parents were proud of me, I wanted her back. There was no problem of attending lectures too as I had a drop. I went to Aerol on my bike with Sameer. I was waiting near her building for two hours. Still I could not see her.

"Let it be Aadi, lets leave." Sameer said.

"I wanted to show her the bike. I am really missing her a lot. I cannot forget her. I want her back. I want to give a last chance to our relationship. I hope it works." We left.

I decided to bring her back in my life.

We came back to our place and went to a bar. I was frustrated. Again the same thoughts were coming to my mind. After a long time I was again thinking of Riya. I ordered 2 beers.

"What happened to you again. You were out of it I thought. Why are you rewinding your life." Sameer asked.

"I don't know Sameer. But today during the delivery of the bike I really missed her. I missed her a lot. Even I thought it was all over, but I can't forget her." I sipped a beer.

"She is not going to come back to you. She must be happy with Amit. Why you are spoiling your life again. Exams are coming near. Why do you want her now. She is history." Sameer reminded me.

"Please Sameer. I can't erase her from my mind. Even this alcohol can't. Let me give one chance again to my relationship. If I fail then I will never think of her again. Please Sameer. Just one chance. Let me try to bring her back to me." I was almost 2 beers down.

I ordered one more can of beer. Sameer tried to stop me from drinking. But I did not listen to him.

"Aadi, do you know what is happening in her life? Is she with Amit or not?" Sameer asked.

"I don't know what's happening and I don't care. I am going to give it a try. I will call her tomorrow. Her birthday is approaching." I said

We left. Alcohol was running all through my body. We went to our smoking zone. There was a small bench. I sat on it. I was not in my senses.

“Why do you drink so much beer. Don’t you have any responsibility towards your family, friends, and Riya.” Sameer said

“Forget it. No one can stop me. I am not hurting anyone.”

“Why are you so stubborn, don’t you understand, you are heading towards a dead end.” Sameer said

Things were turning sour as his voice was raised “If you just want to do what even you know is bloody insane, then get lost, I am leaving.”

“Ok sorry” I replied “I understand it’s not right but I just don’t want to face the real world. Not anymore.”

He gave me some water and the arguments continued.

If I think it practically I was really taking my life to that end of the road, which was much darker than what it appeared to be.

*No, I don’t care, I don’t love her. No, I don’t want her back. I am happy, I am enjoying my life. Who says my heart is broken? Am I falling for her? Who says?*

*I will sleep with all the girls and why I should think of just one girl when she just does not care. In fact she gives a damn....*

Nevertheless, the fact was that I was just fooling myself by saying all this, as I always loved her, cared for her and will do it forever.

However, I still wonder why did I let her go...

Why does someone love one person so much even if that person has betrayed him? I gave it a thought. Still could not find an answer. It is an unsolved mystery.

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## THOUGHTS ....back to present

**T**oday more than a year has passed. Today when I am thinking each and every incident of my past I just could not believe I could remember every small thing. I never knew true love was so strong. Exactly after a year on her birthday when I went to meet her she was

not ready to talk to me. Last year also it was not a great birthday with her. She ignored all my gifts and my letters. This year also she was not ready to take any gift from me. I don't know today if Amit and Riya were together. But I think they were still together from the way Riya behaved. I was so excited to meet her. I thought she would atleast talk properly to me. I didn't expect anything more. But even that did not happen.

She did change her number after that. I tried calling her later. Each day passed thinking of her. I knew I had to concentrate on the studies. But I could not.

I wanted her back right now, nothing would ever be right without her in my life again, and that was never going to happen. Why the hell she had to change her number again?

Whoever said it was better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all had obviously never felt this kind of love and the pain and destruction of life that it's loss leaves behind.. I could never see her now I knew that. It was the last chance on her birthday. But It was all over for sure now. I thought of giving one chance to my relation but it was over. Riya as per my knowledge had overcom this relation. But I still had vivid dreams of her.

I somehow gave my exams. I wanted to forget everything but could not. Again all my memories became sharp in my mind on 31st dec when I met MR BANARJEE. He said some things and I thought of living all the moments again after going home. I was in deep thought. Each picture was crystal clear in front of me. **LOVE CAN NEVER BE WRONG BUT A GIRL CAN BE**. I thought he was right. I made the mistake of loving her. Or atleast I should not think of her now. I needed to move on.

I don't say I am still in deep pain as I was last year when I tried to bring her back in any possible way. I tried everything which I could.

Those were the worst days of my life. Time has made the wounds better, but it could never take away the desire to want , to care for her, cherish and love her. However, those moments I had with Riya were gone. Life moved on.

She is and will always be my first love, there is still a part of my heart that wonders whether she really loved me.

After thinking a lot I really thought I needed to move on. I needed to move on with my studies. I needed to move on with my life. Maybe Mr Banarjee was right. Love is never wrong, but a girl can be wrong. Maybe I needed to accept the fact and move on. Life could not be stopped. It had to move.

I needed to forget all the best moments from my life. I had to erase them from my memory. Today I recollected all those moments. Today I realized what life was. Every person played his or her role and went away. Riya had played her role. She had left and I needed to take life seriously. I had to realise Riya would not come back to me again. She was happy with her life. She didn't need me anymore.

I forgave her for loving him. I forgave her for kissing him. I forgave her for sleeping with him. I forgave her for lying. All this did not hurt me more. What hurt me more was that you allowed him to touch you. You chose to go away from me. I have realized time can't be brought back. Was it my decision which forced you to go or your heart, did not matter today. Today I realised true love hurts. I realised why people opted for one night stands or temporary relationships. Love hurt. It hurt badly.

I gathered courage and strength and decided to forget everything. It was difficult, almost impossible. But I decided to do it. One thing that I would always think of is why did I let you go.

Exams were over. Finally the result was displayed. Only 1 kt was cleared. CSE. I still had one attempt in May to clear the subjects and get eligible to go up to third year. Shinde sir gave all kt's again. I decided to study hard this time and clear all my kt. I wanted to move on. I called Sameer and met him. I wanted to tell him I was taking life seriously. He was the one who always forced me to do so.

“Sameer, I want to move on. I want to forget everything. I really thought about it. And I have made this decision.” I said

“That's nice. I am glad to hear this. I was tired of explaining all this to you. Thank God you realised. I must thank Mr Banarjee.” Sameer said.

“I don't know what made me think about this. But I think he was the face of God. He knew everything about me. I know it's a common story of all couples but still he had that charm in his eyes.” I said

“Oh shut up. He was a normal human being. You were drunk. He was drunk. So stop thinking foolishly. Now you can concentrate on the things you do.”

“I wanted to tell you one more thing. I hope you believe it.”

“What is that now? Don't tell me you are in love again.” He gave me a strange look.

“No, nothing like that.. but I have decided to leave beer. I won't drink from now on. And I am serious. I will smoke but not too much.” Sameer started laughing loudly. He could not control his tears. He was laughing wholeheartedly. I looked at him, trying to convince him that I was serious.

“ Let us see how many days you can keep it up. I will be happy if you quit.” He somehow controlled himself and stopped laughing.

*I had decided it seriously. Aditya won't drink and smoke too much henceforth.*

## STRANGE INCIDENTS

I was in my bedroom and thinking of telling my parents about my academics. They were thinking that their son would be in 6th semester now. But this wasn't the case. I did not have guts to face them after telling the truth. I was thinking about possible solutions. I looked at my cell. 1 message. I opened it.

It was an unknown number.

*Good evening sir. I hope you have received a mail regarding your request. Thanks for contacting us.*

It seemed to be some important message to the person whom it was meant to be for.

I replied.

*Hey, I think you have messaged on a wrong number. What are you talking about?*

1 message received.

*Is it Mr Suresh? This is Harsha here. You had contacted me in the morning regarding a job.*

I replied again.

*You are mistaken. This is Aditya here. I did not contact you. I don't have a job. I am doing engineering and also earning part time.*

1 message received.

*Oh. I am sorry. I think I messaged on a wrong number. Thanks a lot. You saved my job. Mr. Suresh is an important client. I am working for a call centre in Malad. Sorry again*

I thought I could take help from her. My school friend wanted a job. Maybe she could be the appropriate person whom I could consult. I thought of continuing the conversation.

I replied.

*Its ok. No problem. My name is Aditya. I am doing engineering from Euro college. Electronics engineering. I am also involved in part time earning through which I earn a decent amount for my myself. It's technical work.*

1 message received.

*Cool. It's nice to hear you are doing creative work with engineering. Even I have been working in this call centre for the last 6 months. Day shifts.*

I replied again.

*Ok fine. Nice to talk to you. If I have any work I will call you or message you. Save my number. Take care. Have a nice day.*

I called her later. She did not attend the call. I thought I was disturbing her. I waited for her response. After a day I got a reply from her.

*Sorry. I was busy with parents. If you want to call then call tomorrow night. Same time. Take care. Bye.*

I called her the day after. My mom and dad were sleeping. I was in my bedroom. She picked up the call. We greeted each other normally. She was speaking in a low voice. Just hissing sound. I could not hear her voice properly. But I was able to hear what she was saying.

“Why are you speaking like this. So softly.” I asked.

“My parents don’t allow me to talk at night. That’s why.” she said.

“Still you are talking to me. Strange.”

“Shut up. So which year are you in?” she asked.

“It’s a long story. Actually I had a drop after 2nd year and I did not tell my parents about it. They think I am in 3rd year. I don’t have guts to tell them” I said

“It’s bad. You are hurting them. Don’t do this. They trust you so much and you are misleading them. Tell them the truth. I will help you if you want..”

“How can you help me?” I asked

She suggested me to message my mom and dad if I couldn’t speak to them on the phone or face to face. She also told me that she would send an emotional message to me and I should forward that message to them.

The next morning I saw my cell. I had not got any message from her. I messaged her that I had not received any message from her. She replied in few minutes. It was a message in 6 parts. A long message.

*Sorry mom. Sorry dad. I don’t know how you will react after reading this message. But your son has fooled you. Yes mom, I am fooling you. I am fooling myself. I am Sorry. I have given you too much pain. Now I feel your pain. I wanted to tell you from a long time but couldn’t. I wanted to tell you both that I was not in 3rd year. I had to drop a year. Please don’t be angry. I did not have the guts to tell you. I tried but couldn’t. Sorry mom. Sorry dad. I care for you both. I know my act is one big mistake but for Heaven sake!! I love you!! And I am here to change! So let’s talk let’s hug. Let me show you that I am truly sorry. I always blow your trust, I don’t even understand Why did I do it!!! Please forgive me. I will study hard and clear all my subjects. Trust me. Give me one chance to prove myself. I will do whatever you say. Can you accept me as a child after hearing all this?*

I went out with Sameer. I decided to send this message in the afternoon. I did not say anything about Harsha to Sameer. He would have killed me. We watched a movie and I messaged my mom after the movie.

My mom started calling me continuously. I did not pick the call. I was afraid. They would be angry. I had committed a blunder. I was ashamed of myself. I had fooled my parents for almost 7 months. No son could have done what I did. I started crying. Sameer was consoling me. I received a message from mom.

*Come home. Don't worry. We are always with you. Love you.*

I started crying badly. I thought they would hit me. At least shout at me. But they didn't say a word. This made me feel more guilty. They tried so hard to make me strong and capable but I never listened to them.

They gave me whatever I wanted. Still I broke all the rules and their trust, the more they tried to bring out the best in me, the more I tried to ignore them.

“You have the best parents in the whole world Aadi. They didn't even shout at you. Lets go home. I will come with you. Don't worry now and wipe your tears. Listen to whatever they say. Don't argue with them even if Riya is discussed .” Sameer said to me while returning home.

We reached home. Mom and dad were sitting on the couch. I think they had a big discussion before I entered the house. I sat near my dad. Sameer looked at me. He seemed to be afraid. This made me more nervous. I was waiting for them to start the conversation. But they didn't, finally I did.

“Sorry dad, sorry mom. I mean it. I won't do this again”

“How many kt have you got? Is there any problem in the college. Be frank and tell us today.” Dad said.

“Dad, actually I tried my level best to clear the subjects. I mean minimum subjects which would make me eligible for promotion to 3rd year. But I got internal kt. Viva and termwork. So I was not eligible. I tried telling you both many times but didn't have the courage to do it. I am sorry.” I replied with tears in my eyes.

“It's ok. But now what have you decided? Do you want to continue with engineering or not? Do you want to change your stream? Are you capable of completing?” Dad asked me.

“Of course he is capable. He had scored good marks in hsc and also in 1st semester. The main reason is different. I had warned him” mom shouted.

I did not say anything. I was at fault. I kept quiet. Riya was not the reason for my dropping a year. Beer was the main reason. I became complacent. I could not tell my mom about this. Rather I chose to keep quiet.

“Yes dad. I will. Give me one more chance. I will do it. I promise.” I went closer to dad.

“It's ok. See to it you complete your degree. We don't force you to work after that but you should have a degree at least.” Dad said.

I went to my room. I was relaxed. I messaged Harsha that everything was fine. She replied that she was happy to hear that.

I felt a new life in me after chatting with her. I was feeling fresh. Whatever she did for me made me think over it again. Maybe I should take a chance. Maybe I should give another opportunity to my life. I could take the risk of falling in love again. She had one quality of Riya for sure. Helping others.

But I never saw her. I never heard her voice. It was once again going too fast. I should stop my heart before it is too late. But on the other hand I wanted to enjoy this. This time was it lust or love? I couldn't answer this time. Whatever it was, it made me fresh. I felt like living once again. This time with Harsha. A girl from a call centre. Must be a good looking girl. Call centres in Malad have nice looking girls.

I was falling in love once again. A girl whom I had never seen, never heard her voice properly and still she was doing so much for me. She was like Riya. I should not compare her with anyone but some qualities were similar. I think I should give myself another chance. Would Harsha be my 2nd love?

Or was I attracted to her just because she had a few qualities similar to Riya. Caring, understanding, helpful....

God knows. But I wanted to move on... Harsha A SECOND CHANCE...

I called her at night. I was getting attracted towards her. I didn't hear her voice clearly. But whatever I heard was sweet. Moreover she helped me in my biggest problem of telling my parents. I told her I was attracted to her.

"Don't tell me. You seem to be a flirt. You should concentrate on your studies. And you must be having a girlfriend" she said in her hissing voice.

"No, I don't have a girlfriend. It is also a long story. She betrayed me. I really loved her. Talking about studies I don't care a damn. I just want to enter 3rd year. I am earning part time. So who cares." I tried to ignore the topic of Riya.

I did not dare to ask her where she lived. She might think I was getting involved with her. It's silly. Still I tried to be innocent. The boy next door.

"What happened to your girlfriend." She asked.

"She went off with someone else. Actually it's not her fault. I tried to stop her from going with him. He was not the right guy for her. I really cared for her."

"What do you mean by the right kind of guy? What made you think so?" she asked again.

"He was my friend. I mean I met him through her. But then we became friends and he had a master plan in his mind of which I was unaware of. Later he revealed in front of me and fooled my little bachha. But it's over now. You don't worry." I tried to flirt with her. Emotional blackmail.

“You still love her?” she was going on with her questions.

It brought some weird thoughts to my mind. I thought she knew me. She was asking me so many questions that made me wonder.

“It does not matter whether I love her or not. What matters is that she does not love me anymore.” I answered smartly.

“Who told you this?” again a question which meant nothing to her.

“Why are you asking me all these questions. Do you know her? Or did we know each other before these calls? I thought something was cooking.

“What’s wrong?” I was surprised with her asking so many questions.

“Nothing dear. I asked you out of curiosity. If you don’t like I won’t ask. Fine.”

Now this is too fast. Too early to call anyone dear. My 2nd relationship was also moving too fast.

“Can we meet tomorrow. I am free anyways. I can drop you to your office. I have purchased a new bike. What say?” I wanted to see her. I wanted to confirm that she was not known to me.

“I will tell you tomorrow morning. Is it fine?”

I accepted. I received a message in the morning to pick her up from near Eastern express highway. I got ready and went on my new bike. I was keen to meet her. I was in a good mood as I left my house that day, looking for a good time and to see her for the first time. As I cruised down the road with the wind blowing through my hair, smiling at nothing at all... I gave a thought. Would she be like my Riya? Or even better. Then I thought no one could be better than her. I started imagining what she would be like from her voice. She might be so sweet and innocent.

But no one could replace Riya.

I reached the destination. My eyes searched for a pretty face all around. I didn’t see any. I could have waited there for a lifetime if it were for Riya. But it was Harsha.

I called her. She did not pick the call. I messaged her. She did not reply to my message. I was waiting for her for the last 1 hour. I received a message.

*I was just testing you. If you will really come or not. Thanks for coming dear. I know you want to see me. I have mailed you my pics. You can take a look. Bye. I will call you tonight.*

This made me angry. I did not shout at her though. I did not want to spoil her day by fighting with her. I controlled myself. I used to get angry and spoil Riya’s day. I didn’t want to repeat that mistake. I replied to her sweetly.

*It’s ok dear. If anyone needs help I always help them. If you want me to drop you till office I will. No bad intentions. I never understood this when I was with Riya. Particularly around the last phase of our relationship. I don’t want to hurt any one now. Take care. Have a nice day. I will check your pictures.*

I went home and opened my email id. I saw her pictures. She looked good. Not as good as my Riya. But not bad. Brown eyes. Fair. Chubby cheeks. Slightly overweight and slightly on the shorter side. A decent girl. I could carry on with her.

After looking at the pictures my mind said...

*END OF Riya AND BEGINNING OF HARSHA...*

*Finally I can remove the memories of Riya from my mind.*

I messaged her...

*You look nice dear... not perfect but suitable for me.*

She replied

*Then who is perfect for you..*

I replied

*I am sorry if it hurts you. But Riya will always be perfect. No one can replace her. But you have everything that a boy needs .Talk to you at night. You do your work.Bye.*

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## **UNSPOKEN TRUTH**

I made up my mind to propose to her. If there was any girl who could help me forget my past it was Harsha. I decided to propose to her today itself. I was waiting for the day to pass and night to come. I was waiting for some magic to come in my life. But it could not happen. Maybe she was the girl I was waiting for. She was the girl who could bring my life back. Bring my happiness back. I got tired of waiting for Riya. She couldn't hear my cries. She couldn't feel my tears. Only God knows what I was going through. All alone in darkness. It was time to move on. But still something told me to wait. This time I wouldn't listen to this something. This time I would propose to Harsha. Who said love happens just once? It could happen twice.

I went to my room and thought how silly I was. I should have taken this step long ago. Riya wouldn't be back. Maybe this love story was not meant to be successful. God had some different plans in his mind. I had to accept it. Today I was going to give my life a second chance.

I called Harsha around 11pm. She picked up the call.

HARSHA : Hi.Thanks for coming. Did you like my photos?

ME: I want to tell you something. It can change our lives.

HARSHA: Don't tell me you are in love with me.

ME: Just close your eyes and feel it.

HARSHA: What is it? Now you are scaring me.

ME: *Really, I don't deserve a girl like you, I am a flirt, I have the worst image, but still I want to change. I want to improve. I want a girl who can improve me. And it's you. I know somewhere Riya will always be there in my mind. But I love you baby. And today when I saw your photos, I just wanted to hug you and never let you go. You are special to me. You make me complete. I will never leave you alone in this relationship. Love you. Do you wish to be my beloved?*

There was a long silence. I asked her to say something.

HARSHA: Are you telling this for the first time to any girl or you have said this to others too?

How could she know that I had proposed to Riya in the same way. Or she just guessed. I could not understand her. I had a doubt.

ME: It's just for you. I never said it to anyone. And now I have a special song for you too. Tujhe dekh dekh sona, tujhe dekh kar hai jagna..... And I sang it.

Again there was silence.....

HARSHA: This is surely not just for me. You have sung this for someone. Tell me. Am I right?

I became more and more suspicious. I thought she knew me. How could she know all this? But I saw her photos. Were they fake?

ME: I love you. I love you jaan. I love you my sweet little cute bacchu. Missing you.

She didn't say a word. Even I didn't say a word. I could hear some soft noise from her side. I tried to hear what it was. She was crying. She was not letting me know she was crying. My suspicions were confirmed after this.

ME: You are my bachha. You are my jaan. You are my wife. Oh my god! I can't believe it. Tell me truth. Please jaan tell me. Please. You are my Riya. Is it right? You sent me fake photos, Am I right?

Still there was silence. No words exchanged. It brought tears in my eyes. I could not believe what was happening. Is it a dream? When I was in a relationship I let her go. I tried to forget her, but it did not happen. I tried to give second chance to my relationship but she was not ready. I again decided to get over her. I got Harsha. I decided to propose to her. And now again Riya..

ME: Please answer me. Please.

I started crying badly. I wanted to hear her real name.  
She was still crying silently.

ME: Please answer. I know you are my Riya. It's time for us to put away our childish attitude because now I really know how much we are missing each other. Please, do come back to me; you still have a place in my heart, I am assuring you that I have been very lonely ever since you said good-bye. Remember those days when we both shared the songs we sang together, the smiles that came on each time we saw each other. Don't throw away all the sweet memories, which we shared. I am quite sure that you may feel I will not give you a chance based on the old stories. This is the only opportunity we have to rewrite our history. Never mind, just put away your pride because I'll accept any simplicity at any giving time.

Come back, please come back and rewrite our history.

Still there was silence. This silence was killing me.

ME: I know that we haven't talked for a long time, but that doesn't mean that I don't think about you each and every day. You don't know just how much I wish that I could be lying there with you whispering in your ear my heart's deepest desires.

I close my eyes and let my thoughts of you flow. I picture us lying in bed, your arms around me, my head upon your chest, my fingers gently circle over your skin. My soft lips place a whisper of a kiss on your neck. I can hear your heart beats getting louder and faster. In my mind, your lips capture me and hold me there in ecstasy. We look into each other's eyes, lost ... no, found. I feel your hands caress me as you whisper against my ear. You make sweet, sweet love to me and you wipe away a tear. A slight laugh, mixed with a cry, such beautiful feelings ... I sigh. Each time that you touch me, feels like the first time. As each night passes, your presence seems more real here with me, but then I open my eyes and realise it was just another dream. Tears fall from my eyes. Pain sears through my chest. My heart is crying out for you.

Finally she spoke.....

Riya: I want to give you a love bite which will be visible to everyone. So that no girl will come close to you. Let the world know that you are mine. Just mine. And no one can get you now. I love you. Love you a lot. You are my kid. My bachha. So innocent. So sweet. My Mr PERFECT. I have tried so hard to fight these feelings I have, but I can't do it anymore. I know that I love you, but I didn't want to tell you.

We had known each other only for a couple of weeks and you already had me completely and totally to yourself. I don't even want to think about being with anyone else. I thought that if I stopped talking to you, I would forget how I felt ... I thought that if I could keep myself busy, I would be okay, but I can't forget and I'm not okay. I am so overwhelmed by my feelings for you. I need to hear your voice. I need to feel your touch. I can't let you go I feel terrible for not talking to you for the last few months. So many nights I have cried my eyes out, missing you so much, I broke up with Amit long back. He was not right for me. You were right. You are my Mr PERFECT.

ME: I have waited so long to be able to wake up every day to look at your beautiful face. I'm so thankful to God that you're here. You take my breath away with some of the things you say. Just the way I feel when I lay with you, your arms wrapped around me, holding me, like I'm your baby. I am some-

times surprised of how much emotion flows out when I cry over you. You say I'm perfect and that you're the luckiest girl in the world, but you don't see what I see when I look at you. I am so lucky to even have you touch me with your hands. Or to even glance my way. I don't know what I did to deserve you in my life, but I thank God for letting me do it. You are so unbelievably perfect.

We didn't realise when the sun rose. It was 7am in morning and we were still talking to each other. We decided to meet near the central garden at 2pm. We went to sleep.

Waiting for the new day. I never thought I will get her back. I never thought such a thing would happen with me. The world seemed beautiful today. Everyone around seemed to be happy. Suddenly my outlook towards looking at people changed. It was a positive start. The day which I was waiting for had arrived. I was going to meet Riya my love after such a long time. I had forgotten her touch. I had forgotten her smile.

Did she still look same? I never saw her for the last few months. I was thinking about this all the time. I wanted to feel her touch again. I wanted to see her smile again. I could not wait for the clock to strike 2pm.

I remembered each and every thing about her. She had said once that I would never get a girl who could love me as she did. She was true. Now I understood love couldn't happen twice. It could happen just once. I was getting attracted to Harsha because she was not Harsha. She was my Riya. The days I spent without her, the nights I thought about her looking at stars, the dreams which involved her, the places where we went, the moments that we shared everything was fresh in mind. She told me she loved me more than the world and that she couldn't imagine being with anyone else. We had such an amazing time when we were together. When I found out the truth about her I was distraught, heart-broken, and felt used, foolish and disgusted. But still today I was waiting for her on the same place where our relationship became intimate. I loved her beyond any limit.

She came. The moment I saw her my heart skipped a beat again. The naughty smile was back on her face. The charm seemed to be lost though. Maybe her hectic schedule was the reason. But I must admit she was looking more beautiful than before. More perfect than before. She had straightened her hair. She looked amazing. She came closer. Closer and suddenly she kissed me. I looked around to see if anyone was watching. No one was there. She smiled.

“You have not changed at all. Why do you have to look here and there.” She smiled and kissed me again

“As if you have changed. You are still the same. Care a damn about the people around.” I said and caught her hand.

To touch her after such a long time was beautiful. Riya was back. We decided to go to Grant lane. For the first time she was sitting on my bike. She appreciated it. She put her arm round my waist and leaned against me. I kissed her. I asked her what exactly happened. How did she get my number as I had changed it. What had happened with Amit? I had many questions in my mind. As we reached Grant lane and sat on the bench where we used to sit she began telling me about her life in last one year...

## REVEALING THE TRUTH

*It was the beginning of a new relationship for me. It was not easy to forget the moments that I had with you. It was not easy to forget the places where we had gone. I never forgot you. Never did your thoughts leave my mind. The farther I went the closer I was getting to you. I tried to be loyal with Amit. He was behaving very sweetly. He used to care a lot for me. I had requested him to give me some time to forget you. He agreed to it. I used to cry a lot when I was with him. When we went to Grant lane, I cried for almost an hour. Whenever his bike passed Central garden I could not stop my tears. He knew all these things. He was always with me. When I had an operation, He supported me a lot. I realised I should give him the same love in return. I should not think about you. I said sorry to him and told him this would never happen again. We always used to fight when you were discussed.*

*“You are not happy with me I know. I can’t make letters for you, I can’t sing a song for you. I am simple. I can’t give you surprises” Amit said one day.*

*“Why do you compare yourself with Aadi? I really don’t understand why you have to bring him between us? Have I ever complained about these things? Please Amit stop comparing yourself with him.”*

*The arguments continued. It was not easy to adjust with him. As days passed he started showing his true colors. He started avoiding me. He started shouting at me.*

*“Don’t you understand, you idiot. I am busy. I can’t meet you know. So stop bothering me. I will call you when I am free.” Amit used to say.*

*“What the hell. Aadi never used to do this. He always used to talk to me. He never gave me such reasons except for the last few days. We have hardly been together for 2 months and you are behaving so rudely. Aadi was correct.” I said.*

*“Now you are comparing me to him. If you still love him you can go back to him. Get lost” he slammed the phone down.*

*We started fighting daily. He never understood me the way you used to. Whenever he wanted me on his bed he used to behave sweetly. I used to ignore him at that time. One day your mom called me.*

*“Riya is everything fine? Whenever I talk to Aadi about you he avoids the topic. Any problem?”*

*I did not tell her what had happened between us. I told her that we both had decided to concentrate on studies first and then think of all these things. She accepted the reason and wished me luck for my future. She never called me after that Maybe she understood that we both needed time to decide what we wanted.*

*Each day it was getting more and more difficult for me to be with Amit and live without you. I tried to forget each and every thing between us but it never happened. Many times instead of taking Amit's name I used to call him Aadi. It happened several times. We fought on this also. Whenever we used to fight he never cared to call me. He only cared just to be physical with me. I finally decided to tell him that I couldn't adjust with him.*

*"Amit, I cant forget Aadi. I love him. I still love him a lot. I am not going back to him. I have to pay for whatever I did to him. Maybe he will never forgive me, but I can't stop loving him. You are a false person from head to toe. You never loved me. Aadi was right. You can never love anyone. I lost my friend Neha because of you and my love too. Anyways bye forever. I won't call you again."*

*"Are you mad? You left Aditya because of me. And now you are leaving me because of Aditya. Are you so desperate to have both guys with you on bed?"*

*"Are you drunk? How could you speak like this to me. You are cheap. Aadi was perfect. He always told me that Neha had the cheapest boyfriend in town. He was right. Get lost. I don't need you."*

*" Bloody bitch. Even I don't need you. I took the feel of you as much as I can. I know you won't allow me to do anything more. You remembered Aditya whenever I tried to touch you. Get lost. Fuck off." he kept the phone down.*

*I really missed you that day. I wanted to call you. But I controlled myself. I still remembered your message which said forget me and forget my name. I could not call you after all that I did to you. I was guilty. I was all alone. No friends and no love.*

*Problems were not over yet. They kept on coming one after the other. My dad's business collapsed. We had to sell our car. We had to sell our flat where we used to live. We did not want to sell the other flat. We kept it as it is. But it would have been too hectic for me and my brother if we shifted there. We rented a flat in Aerol in the same building. Still God had to test me more. Both the shops which my dad owned were shut down. Suddenly financial problems arose. I could not take admission in 3rd year. I had to look for a job. I had no option left than to drop a year. I searched for a job and got it in a call center in Malad. I had day shift there. I became the only person to earn in my family. Last year I saw too much of the seaming side of life. I could not think of coming back to you again. I had so many responsibilities on me. My salary was 12000 rupees. Each day killed me from inside. My schedule became hectic. Suddenly I got a message from you.*

*I replied to you rudely. The reason was but obvious. I did not wanted to be in a relationship again. I was frustrated with my job. Moreover I was really guilty to come back to you. If you had behaved the same way as you did in the last few days of our relationship it would have increased my problems. I did not see any change in you when I met you on my birthday. I was going to the office. I saw that you had realised my importance but still I was not sure about your behaviour. I already was mentally disturbed. Going through the worst phase of my life. I decided to change my number to solve this problem. I changed my number so that you could not contact me. I got busy in my routine work.*

*I had a client Mr Suresh. He needed some urgent information by the end of the day. I did his work and messaged him. But you got that message. I checked both the numbers. There was a difference of just one digit. His number ended with 9061 and your number ended with 9060. I did not know that this was your number. Even you had changed your number. Then when you replied you were Aditya from Euro college I started chatting with you and kept in touch with you. And you as usual started flirting with me. In my call centre it was compulsory to change the name in the calling department. I had given my name as Harsha. I started talking to you using the same name. As I started talking to you I realised you still love me. That brought a smile to my face. I still didn't reveal my identity. I wanted to see to which limit you could go with Harsha. But you told me, I mean Harsha that Riya will always be your life. I felt you had changed. And now I am with you.*

“I am sorry I took you in the wrong sense. I could not see your love at that time. I am sorry for all the pain I caused you. I am sorry for the last one year when I was away from you. Can we be together again?” she had fear in her eyes.

“ Yes jaan. I am always yours. I can't forget the pain that you caused me. I can't forget the days when I needed you the most but still I was alone. I can't forget the time when I fought with the world alone. But I don't think much about these things. When I close my eyes all that I can see is your smiling face with a seductive look in your eyes. All I can remember is all the sweet moments that we shared. This time I won't ignore you. I am sorry for whatever I did. I should have given you time.”

I slept on her lap. I felt like I could die happily then. I missed all these small things. I looked at her eyes and tears came. She kissed my tears and played with my hair and cheeks. We had pani puri and paavbhaaji. The day was complete. It was 5pm. We met. We kissed. We had a ride. I slept on her lap. We cried. We laughed. We ate. Everything that we used to do earlier, was again happening. My day was complete. Oh no! not yet. How could I forget it. One thing is missing.

“Jaan , there is no one at home. Mom and dad have gone to watch a movie. They will have their dinner and then come back. We can move to my house. What say?” I said.

She agreed. I was missing this. Now the day will be completed. We reached home. We went to my bedroom. I closed the door....

We kissed. We hugged. We were lying naked on the bed. To make up after a big fight and a big break up really feels good. It brought charm on our faces. I kissed her back. I remembered what Amit had said. The black spot on her back was too hot. While kissing her back I observed carefully. *There was no black spot on her back.* This brought a big smile on my face. It meant He never touched her back, he was just fooling me. This made me more wild. I loved my Riya. I always said, My Riya will never be wrong. She is perfect. I grabbed her and made up with her... as we lay down...she asked me

“Did you miss this?”

“Yes a lot. I always told you. You are perfect. Your body is a wonderland. Love you a lot...”

“This time I am loving you the way you used to. And you are loving me the way I used to. I won’t leave you ever now. I am all yours. I realised what life is without you...love you too.”

Being in each others arms we were staring at each other...I could feel her eyes conveying the same thing to me that my eyes did at that moment....

.....**AND I CANT STOP LOVING YOU**.....

“Jaan, tell me the full name of Mr SURESH. We should thank him. If it had not been for him we would not have met again. What a coincidence it was. I thought it was only possible in Bollywood films. I still could not believe it happened with us in real life and not reel life.” I said

“I don’t remember his full name, but let me check on my mobile. I have his details. Got it. His name is Mr SURESH BANARJEE. SALES MANAGER.”

“What? Are you sure? Can you repeat the name. Check it once again.”

I was shocked to hear Banarjee’s name.

“Yes dear. His name is MR BANARJEE. SALES MANAGER.” She confirmed.

I could not believe this..... this was the second coincidence.

He said.... Love is always right , but a girl can be wrong.

I wanted to tell him that my love is also right and my girl is also right.....

I wanted to tell him that my Riya is right. I wanted to tell him, she loves me. I wanted to tell him, she cares for me. But *Few things* should be *left unsaid*...

REALLY SOME LOVE STORIES CANNOT BE PREDICTED.....

*Love stories never end..... this love story has not ended yet...*

## Epilogue

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We loved, we fought, we broke up, we had a surprise element and we were together again. A new morning was on the way. Everyone around me was happy as I got what I had prayed for. I never thought such a coincidence would ever happen with me. We never met Mr Banarjee after that. He came and brought us together. I still don't know whether MR Banarjee exists?

Even though we are together today we are still missing Swapnil and Anup. As we both were in a year drop we never went to college. She had her job in Malad and even I was busy. We did not have their number. None of us had. Not even Sameer. We talked to them once when they met us accidentally but the bonding was over. Maybe the fact that they were with Riya when I was alone took them away from me. Sameer was still a darling. He always stood by my side.

Today when I have got my Riya back I have decided to quit cigarette too. I had already stopped drinking beer. After more than a year, today we don't know where Amit and Neha were. Amit had called once. Not me. He had called Riya. She did not attend his call, instead sent him a message that she was back in relationship with Aditya. He never contacted us after that. Neha was out of the picture. The cold war that started between Riya and Neha didn't end. I did not interfere in solving it. It hardly affected our lives. She also accepted that she had been in touch with my mom. Not regularly but sometimes. If I had checked with my mom I could have found Riya's number much earlier than I got to know through a coincidence. It would have been a different story then. Semesters were approaching still we both didn't care about studies. I did not want studies to come between us. I never talked about it in front of her. I used to go to pick her and drop her to office daily. We enjoyed rides on bike together. This time we loved each other much more than before. Mom was not aware of it yet. I waited for the right moment to tell. But before the right moment everything was a mess again. I never knew there were so many twists and turns in my way. I never thought I will rewind my life and get stuck in midway....Everything was going smooth and steady then I wonder why the hell I had to apply brakes when not needed. When God gave me everything I prayed for, I had everything I wanted. I rejected everything and chose a wrong path which was destructive. I had only aim in life "Riya". She will come back again with such a coincidence was far away than my belief. We both realized our mistakes and decided to stay together forever.

Riya accepted me thinking I was the one who could bring happiness in her life, I was the one who could love her the most, I was the one whom she could rely and trust on....When she thought about all these things why on the earth did I had to make her think once again...

I always said.....

Some love stories can't be predicted.

Some love stories are not meant to be successful like Bollywood films.

I tried to contact her.... I called her.

She messaged me.

*Henceforth please don't message or call me. Please your number irritates me. Your face irritates me. Your everything irritates me. Don't do all the drama once again. You betrayed me for money. You wanted revenge.*

I messaged her....

*I never put up a show dear. Please I am sorry. Forgive me. I never wanted to hurt you again. Please I won't make this mistake again. No bachha, I never betrayed you for money, please not at least for money. Still if you think so, I will return you whatever you want. You really think I betrayed you for just 18000 rupees. I will give them back. I forgave you the last time. Please give me one chance.*

She replied.

*You are damn cheap. Please stop all this. It spoils my entire day. Today you have hurt me a lot.. Money didn't matter to me, what matterd was your trust. Which you broke like a piece of glass. TRUST, HEART AND RELATIONS are three things that you should respect. I had told you this earlier also. I hope you remember it. However, you broke all the three and left me alone once again. Now just buzz off. I will never forgive you now. You never deserved me. For you my pain was just a game. Hence you cheated me a lot. Everything was a fake. Hate you a lot.*

I replied.

*What the hell. I didn't cheat you. I got confused. All the thoughts of you sleeping with him came in my mind. I am sorry. Please. Can't you understand? Even you went with him. Did I say anything that time. Now what problem do you have with me.*

She replied.

*Please. After knowing me for the last few years you could say this then I was a fool to love you so much. God is with me and has saved me from you. You can never change. We were together again and we were so happy. Why did you have to do this. Now you are confused. You took revenge. You never wanted me back.*

IS EVERYTHING OVER? Aditya will be back to unfold his life. Aditya will be back to reveal the unsaid truth.

*But this time will it be Riya?....*

*Was Riya's promise of love fulfilled? Was Aditya's promise of love fulfilled?*

*Will Aditya's life be denigrated throughout or will there be some sunlight for atleast to let his shadows seen..!!*

*Few things left unsaid!!!*

*By-Sudeep Nagarkar*

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