

A STORY BY
KUNWARPAL SINGH

Did I Lose You?

maybe it's not in the destiny even bowing
to spiritual places cannot change it



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For theodore,

*If love ever had a quiet beginning,
it was you walking into my life without trying.*

*You became my habit, my calm,
and the part of my day I never wanted to end.*

This isn't a story... it's what my heart chose, every day.

— Kunwar

*Kunwar to be address as rajveer and all the remaining
characters real names are annonymou.*

*I had lived for years without understanding
my own life... until I met her.*

*You are the prayer my fate never
answered,
The story my heart keeps trying to
write.
Even when you visit my dreams, The
dawn steals you before the light.
Perhaps some souls are only meant To
love from a distance unseen—
Denied in reality,
And not even allowed to dream.*

*asked for nothing but a dream of
you, A borrowed moment, soft and
true. But fate was cruel in every way
— It stole you even there away—
If love can't live where dreams begin,
How will my heart ever win?*

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Chapter 1

The Life Everyone Saw, Not the One I Lived



I don't know how life begins.

People say it starts the moment you take your first breath, or when someone holds you for the first time, or when you learn to say your own name. But if I'm being honest—really honest—none of those moments ever felt like a beginning to me. They felt like... movement. Like something already in motion, something that didn't ask me if I was ready.

If I had to explain my life the way it feels inside me, I would say it didn't begin at birth. It didn't begin in childhood either. It didn't even begin in those loud, confusing teenage years when everything feels like it matters too much.

No.

My life, the one I actually understand, the one I can sit with and not feel like I'm lying to myself... It began much later.

It began when I was twenty-three.

2024.

I remember that year like it has a texture. Like if I close my eyes, I can feel it under my fingers—slightly rough, a little uneven, like something unfinished. I had already lived twenty-three years by then. Twenty-three birthdays, twenty-three winters, twenty-three versions of myself that kept changing without asking me.

But none of them felt like me.

It's strange to say that out loud. It sounds ungrateful, almost. Like I'm dismissing everything that came before. But I'm not. I'm just... separating it. Those years happened, yes. I moved through them, I made choices, I laughed, I hurt people, I hurt myself. But understanding? That came later.

Clarity came later.

And that's where this story begins.

With me.

Rajveer.

And her.

The one who didn't just walk into my life but rearranged something inside me without even trying.

Ishika.

But I never called her that.

Not really.

For me, she was always "Ishuu."

Soft. Familiar. Like a name that sits closer to the heart than the tongue.

And if this is my story, then she isn't just a part of it.

She is the center of it.

—

But before her... there was a version of me that I sometimes struggle to recognize.

Three years before everything changed, my life looked... impressive.

At least, that's what people told me.

If you stood outside it—just looked at the surface—you'd think I had figured things out early. People around me didn't just notice me, they... watched me. The way you watch someone who seems to be living a life you secretly wish you had.

I could see it in their eyes.

In the way conversations paused when I walked in.

In the way people asked questions they didn't really need answers to.

“Bro, tu manage kiven karda ae sab?”

“Yaar, tere vargi life chahidi ae.”

They said it like it was a compliment. Like I should feel proud of it.

And I did. Back then, I did.

Because from the outside, it looked like I had everything under control.

I was in my final year of college, just about to graduate. That phase where everyone starts pretending they have a plan, even if they don't. The campus had this restless energy to it—people talking about placements, future, moving cities, doing something “big.”

And in the middle of all that... there was me.

I wasn't the guy who stressed.

I wasn't the guy who stayed up worrying about what came next.

I was the guy people pointed at.

Not because I was the smartest, or the most disciplined.

But because I looked like I was enjoying life more than anyone else.

And maybe that was enough.

Or maybe that's all people ever really see.

—

I had a reputation.

Not the kind you build slowly, carefully. Mine came with noise. With stories that spread faster than truth. With half-understood moments that turned into full versions of something else by the time they reached someone new.

People called me things.

“Cool.”

“Playboy.”

“Fuckboy.”

Words that carried a certain... image with them. An identity that I didn't exactly reject either.

In fact, I leaned into it.

Because it was easy.

Because it worked.

Because when people already expect you to be a certain kind of person, it becomes simpler to just... be that person.

There was a rhythm to it.

Late-night calls that didn't mean anything in the morning.

Messages that were more about attention than connection.

Laughs that sounded real but didn't stay with me after.

I knew how to talk. I knew how to make someone feel special at that moment. And I also knew how to step away before anything became too real.

It was a balance I had mastered.

Or at least, that's what I thought.

—

But there's something no one tells you about being that version of yourself.

The version everyone admires.

The version people envy.

There's always a second layer to it.

Something quieter.

Something people don't see.

Because admiration doesn't mean understanding.

And jealousy... it doesn't always show on the surface.

I could feel it sometimes.

In the way people smiled a little too tightly.

In the way jokes carried an edge if you listened closely enough.

In the silence that followed after I left a group.

A kind of distance.

Like people liked watching me... but they didn't really know me.

And maybe I didn't let them.

—

If I look back at that version of my life now, it feels... shiny.

But not solid.

Like something that looks good under light but doesn't hold weight when you actually try to lean on it.

At that time, though, I didn't question it.

Why would I?

Everything was working.

Or at least, it looked like it was.

—

College itself had started with its own kind of chaos.

There was a girl.

I don't even know how to define what she was to me.

She wasn't my girlfriend.

Not really.

But she wasn't nothing either.

It was one of those situations where things exist in between labels, where you don't say things out loud but everyone around you still... assumes.

And assumptions can be louder than truth.

Somewhere in that... I got a name for myself.

Not the good kind.

Badnami.

The kind that sticks even when you try to explain it away.

The kind that doesn't care about context.

At that time, I brushed it off.

I laughed about it.

“Chadd yaar, loka da kaam hi ae bolna.”

But even then, somewhere deep down, I knew that things were starting to shape in a way I didn't fully control.

Still... I didn't stop.

I didn't pause and ask myself what I was doing.

Because pausing means facing something.

And I wasn't ready for that yet.

—

Life moved.

It always does.

One thing blending into another, days slipping past without asking if you're paying attention.

And then... she came into my life.

Arohi.

If I'm being fair, she was a good person.

More than good, actually.

There was a calmness to her, a kind of sincerity that doesn't try too hard to prove itself. The kind of person who doesn't need to be loud to be noticed.

And for a while... I thought what I felt for her was love.

I said it to myself in different ways.

Convincing, almost.

"Ha, main ohnu pyaar karda waan."

Because that's what it looked like, right?

Spending time, talking, being there.

That should be enough to call it love.

But there's a difference between something that looks like love... and something that actually is.

I didn't know that then.

I thought love was about presence.

About proximity.

About not leaving.

I didn't understand that it was also about truth.

About intention.

About not hurting someone just because you can.

And maybe that's where I failed her.

Because she deserved something real.

And I... I was still living in something that only looked real
from the outside.

—

If I sit with that memory now, it doesn't feel heavy in a
dramatic way.

It feels... quiet.

Like a room where something important happened, but no one
spoke about it afterward.

I wasn't good for her.

Not because I was a bad person.

But because I didn't know how to be the kind of person she needed.

And maybe I didn't even know how to be honest with myself yet.

—

By the time all of this was happening, graduation was already around the corner.

The end of something that had defined my routine, my surroundings, my identity for years.

People were preparing to move on.

To step into whatever came next.

And I was there too.

Standing at that edge.

Looking like I had it all together.

Feeling like I didn't quite understand any of it.

And somewhere, without realizing it...

I was getting closer to the point where my life would actually begin.

But at that moment, I didn't know that yet.

I was still... the person everyone thought I was.

And maybe that's the most dangerous place to be.

When the world believes in a version of you...

that you haven't even questioned.

—

I didn't know it then, but everything I thought I understood
about myself was about to be undone.

Slowly.

Quietly.

And in a way I wouldn't be able to ignore.

Because some people don't just enter your life.

They change the meaning of it.

And I was about to meet her.

But not yet.

Not just yet.

Graduation was almost over by then.

It didn't end suddenly. It never does. It just starts slipping away slowly. The same corridors, the same classrooms, the same people—but something about them doesn't feel as permanent anymore. Conversations start changing. Plans start replacing jokes. And even if no one says it out loud, everyone knows... this part is finishing.

I was in that phase too.

Still surrounded by the same group, still moving through the same routine, but things had started to loosen. The weight of “college life” wasn't sitting the same way anymore. It felt like something I had already lived, even before it fully ended.

And in between all of that... there was Arohi.

She wasn't loud in my life.

She wasn't someone who tried to pull attention or create moments that demanded to be noticed. She was just there... in a steady way. The kind of presence that doesn't interrupt your life, but quietly becomes a part of it.

We used to talk.

Not in a dramatic way. Not in those long, emotional conversations people imagine when they hear about something important. It was normal. Simple. Comfortable.

And maybe that's why I got confused.

Because comfort can feel like something deeper when you've never really sat with yourself long enough to know the difference.

I believed I loved her.

Or maybe I believed I should love her.

Because she was good to me.

Because she didn't complicate things.

Because being with her didn't disturb my life—it fit into it.

At that time, that felt enough.

But looking back, I can see something very clearly now.

I never stopped being the same person while I was with her.

Nothing in me shifted.

Nothing in me slowed down.

Nothing in me questioned itself.

I was still living the same way. Talking the same way. Carrying the same habits, the same mindset, the same carelessness that I had built for myself. Being with her didn't make me pause. It didn't make me look inward. It didn't make me become more honest.

And maybe that is where the truth was.

Because when something is real... it doesn't just sit beside your life.

It changes how you live it.

With her, I didn't change.

I just... continued.

And that continuation looked fine from the outside. There were no big fights. No dramatic breaks. No obvious signs that something was missing.

But absence doesn't always announce itself loudly.

Sometimes it's just there... in what never happens.

I never felt that pull to become better for her.

I never felt that responsibility that comes without being asked.

I never felt afraid of losing her in a way that made me understand her value.

And at that time, I didn't even recognize that as a problem.

I thought everything was okay.

Because nothing was going wrong.

But “nothing going wrong” is not the same as “everything being right.”

That difference... I learned later.

—

Life was still moving in the same direction.

Days were passing in a pattern I had gotten used to. Wake up, college, people, conversations, small moments, distractions. It all blended together in a way that didn't demand too much thinking.

And maybe that's why I didn't stop.

Because stopping requires awareness.

And awareness... was not something I had yet.

If I felt something slightly off, I ignored it.

If something didn't sit right internally, I moved past it.

If a situation needed more honesty than I was ready to give, I kept it at a surface level.

That was my way of handling things.

Not intentionally hurting anyone.

But also not fully understanding what I was doing either.

And when you live like that, things don't break immediately.

They just... stay incomplete.

—

By the time everything was wrapping up, I had already started stepping out of that college space mentally.

People around me were talking about what comes next. Jobs, plans, moving cities, figuring life out.

I heard those conversations.

I was part of them.

But I wasn't really... inside them.

I didn't feel that urgency.

I didn't feel that pressure.

I was just... there.

Like I had been through something, but hadn't paused to understand it yet.

And maybe that's what those years were for me.

Not clarity.

Just experience.

Unprocessed.

Unquestioned.

—

If someone had looked at me at that time, they wouldn't have seen anything missing.

I still looked like the same person.

Confident.

Sorted.

Living freely.

Nothing seemed off.

And maybe that's why even I didn't question anything deeply.

Because when your life doesn't show cracks on the outside, you don't go looking for them inside.

—

But there's something about endings.

Even quiet ones.

They create space.

And space has a way of bringing things forward... whether you're ready for them or not.

At that time, I didn't know what was about to change.

I didn't know that everything I thought was "normal" would start feeling different.

I didn't know that I would finally understand the difference between what I had been living...

and what I was about to feel.

I was just stepping out of one phase.

Without realizing I was about to enter something that would define everything after it.

—

And maybe that's the thing.

You don't always notice the moment before your life changes.

It doesn't come with a sign.

It just waits... quietly.

Until you meet the person who makes you see everything differently.

And I was closer to that moment than I realized.

Chapter 2

*The Day You Held My Hand, Everything
Changed Quietly*



Final exams had started, and Ishuuu was my senior.

Even now, when I think about how we first really came into each other's lives, I don't know how to explain it properly without it sounding bigger than it was in that moment. At that time, it did not feel like some grand beginning. It just felt like one of those small things that happen and pass. But later, when I looked back, I could see that some things had already started changing quietly.

Ishuuu coming into my life was also like that.

Something had started before I even understood it had started.

I still remember the date. 12th of May. We had a paper that day. Exam days always had their own kind of atmosphere. Everyone looked tired, half-prepared, irritated, trying to act normal while carrying stress in their face. There was noise everywhere, but it was all exam noise. People revising at the last minute, calling friends, asking useless questions they should have asked days ago, pretending not to panic.

And in the middle of that, something happened that stayed with me.

That day, for the first time, Ishuuu held my hand in public and pulled me with her.

Just like that. For no reason.

At least no reason that I knew.

We were nothing then. Just good friends. That was it. Our bonding was already there in its own way, but it was still simple. Easy. She had this thing in her nature—this feeling that she did not care too much about what people would think. She was like that. Straight in some moments, detached in some moments, and somehow still very present.

At that time, I was in a relationship with someone else.

And because of that, maybe I should have noticed that moment more carefully.

Maybe I should have stopped and thought about why it stayed with me.

But I didn't.

I did not give that moment much importance then. It happened, and I let it pass like any other small thing. Maybe because I did not know yet that some moments only become visible later. In real time, they look ordinary. Later, they begin to glow a little in memory.

That day became like that for me.

Not because something was said.

Nothing was said.

Not because something officially changed.

Nothing officially changed.

But because sometimes a small physical moment—a hand catching yours, a sudden pull, someone taking you somewhere without explanation—leaves behind a strange kind of awareness. Not clear enough to understand. Just enough to remain.

And then life moved again.

After that, things in her life started changing a lot.

Drastic changes came. That is the only right way to say it. She started going distant from everyone. Proper distant. She became side corner type. Like someone who was there, but not really there with people anymore. Life on her side was very disturbed then. I did not know everything. I did not even know enough. I just knew that something had shifted around her.

And this is where things become difficult to explain, because at that time I did not understand why I kept noticing her like this.

But I did.

I noticed that she was withdrawing.

I noticed that something was not normal.

I noticed that the version of her people were seeing and the version of her that was actually living through something were probably not the same.

I did not have details. I only had a feeling.

And even now, when I think of that phase, it feels like one of those strange places in life where you do not know why you are being pulled toward someone's pain, but you are.

Like Rab was arranging something quietly and not telling either of us.

Her birthday was 31st May.

Mine was 29th May.

I remember that whole stretch clearly because some dates don't leave you once they settle into your heart. I was alone in my own way around that time. Then 31st May came. Her birthday. 31st May 2023. I remember that exactly.

Ishuuu was happy that day. At least that is how it looked.

People around her, like always, were saying the usual things. Appreciating her, wishing her, talking to her, being around her.

Birthday wali normal energy. But I remember that what came out of me was something else.

I asked her only one thing.

“Tu khush ae?”

That was it.

Not “happy birthday” in the usual way people do.

Not some long thing.

Just that.

Are you happy?

Even now, I don’t fully know why I asked that. I have tried many times to answer that question for myself, and honestly, I still cannot. I don’t know what in me noticed that. I don’t know what made me ask her that instead of anything else. I don’t know whether I sensed something, whether it came from care, whether it came from instinct, or whether sometimes the heart understands a person before the mind does.

All I know is that I asked.

And that question stayed.

After that, for almost two months, she was completely different.

Not different in some small mood way. Different like something inside her had changed, or maybe something had become too heavy for her to carry in front of everyone. In those two months, I called her twice. She did not pick up either time. Once I spoke to her mother. Once I spoke to her father. But nobody actually let me talk to her.

At that time, I still did not know what exactly was happening.

No one had sat me down and explained anything.

No one had said, this is what she is going through.

But by then I had understood at least this much—that something was very different in Ishuuu's life. Something was off in a serious way. Something was happening that had pushed her away from everyone.

And maybe for the first time in my life, I did not respond to distance with ego.

Usually, when someone pulls away, people make it about themselves.

Why didn't they reply?
Why didn't they pick up?
Why am I being ignored?

But with her, it did not feel like that.

I was not irritated.

I was not offended.

I was just thinking, tu theek ae na?

That thought kept coming.

Not in a dramatic way. Just steadily. Quietly. Again and again.

Then one day, she replied to my message.

And when she did, I was the one saying it again.

"Tu theek ae na?"

I said it because somewhere inside me there was a feeling of dosh too. A kind of weight. Not because I had done something direct that I can explain here, but because when someone is going through something and you sense it, and still you cannot reach them properly, a helpless kind of guilt starts sitting in you. Like you should have understood earlier. Like you should have been able to do more. Like maybe you saw something and still could not hold it.

And she understood that too.

She understood that I was not asking casually.

That I was not saying it like other people say things just to sound concerned.

Because according to many others, the story around her was simpler. People thought, Ishuu has got attitude now. Ishuu has changed. Ishuu is behaving differently. Ishuu has become distant.

But it was not like that.

At least I knew that much.

It was not attitude.

It was not some random change.

There was something real behind it.

And maybe that is why she noticed my question.

Maybe that is why it reached her.

Maybe that is why things between us began shifting from there.

After that, we started talking daily.

Roz.

That simple thing changed a lot without looking like much from outside. There was no announcement, no big turning point, no one dramatic conversation that divided things clearly. We just started talking every day, and then daily talking slowly became normal. It became part of the day. Part of routine. Part of thought.

And with that, closeness came.

Not the forced type.

Not the type where two people try to become important to each other.

It happened naturally.

We became close enough that trust started building between us in a wide way. Broad way. We would share things with each other. Talk properly. Say things that maybe we did not say to others. Small things, random things, serious things, useless things. The kind of talking where a person slowly stops feeling like “someone you know” and starts feeling like someone whose presence has entered your everyday life.

That was happening with us.

And it was not heavy then.

It was light too.

There was fun in it.

Comfort.

A kind of looseness.

We used to even put silly bets with each other. Proper putthe-siddhe bets. Stupid, funny kind. I won't mention that bet here, because even in my own memory it belongs more to that private, playful space between us than to some formal telling. But it was funny. And the point is not what the bet was. The point is that this was the kind of space we had reached.

That easy space.

That warm space.

Where two people can be serious one minute and completely stupid the next.

And maybe that is how real trust starts.

Not only in pain.

Also in lightness.

Also in the ability to talk nonsense without feeling watched.

Also in the comfort of repetition—same person, again and again, every day, and still it doesn't feel heavy.

At that point, I still did not know where all this would go.

I did not have some big realization yet.

I did not sit there and tell myself that this girl would become the center of my life.

Nothing like that had happened.

But one thing had definitely started becoming true.

Her presence was no longer occasional in my life.

It had started settling.

Quietly.

Naturally.

In the way some people do before you even realize how much space they have taken inside you.

Time passed like this.

Not in big events. Not in anything that would stand out if someone was watching from outside. Just days that kept going, one after another, with her becoming a normal part of them.

There was no point where I stopped and said, “this is important.”

But there were small moments where I could feel that something was not the same anymore.

Like when something happened during the day, and without thinking, I would reach for my phone—not to post, not to scroll—but to tell her.

Or when I noticed I was waiting for her reply without checking the time.

Not impatiently.

Just... waiting.

Earlier, I never noticed these things about myself.

Now I was.

And I didn't question it.

I just let it be.

—

At the same time, everything else in life was still going on.

People were still around.

Conversations were still happening.

Nothing had stopped.

But somewhere, the way I was present in those spaces had slightly changed.

I wasn't as involved as before.

Not because I was avoiding anyone.

Just because my attention had shifted somewhere else without me planning it.

And that shift was quiet.

No one pointed it out.

No one asked.

Even I didn't fully understand it.

—

I was still in that other relationship.

That part of my life had not ended.

But if I am being honest, I had stopped being present there in the same way.

There was no big incident.

No fight.

No clear break.

Just a slow difference in how much of me was actually there.

And that difference... I did not confront at that time.

I just continued.

—

With Ishuu, things stayed simple.

No labels.

No discussions about what this is.

No expectations spoken out loud.

We just kept talking.

That was it.

And maybe that's why it felt easy.

Because nothing was being forced into a definition.

—

If I look at that phase now, I can say this clearly:

Something had started changing in my life.

But it had not yet reached a point where I could see it fully.

It was still in that stage where things feel normal from inside...

but later you realize that nothing was actually the same
anymore.

—

I didn't know what this would become.

I didn't think that far.

I didn't sit and imagine anything ahead.

I was just living that time as it was.

But one thing had already happened without me realizing it
properly.

She had become someone whose presence I didn't question.

And that... was new for me.

—

And sometimes, the biggest shifts don't feel big when they
happen.

They just settle in quietly...

until one day, you look back and realize
that was the point where everything started moving in a
different direction.

Chapter 3

We Knew It... But We Couldn't Say It



After that, something between us became firmer.

I remember the date very clearly. 3rd November 2023. I don't want to force big words on that day, but something changed in me because of it. A kind of trust got built that has stayed with me till today. And I know this about myself very honestly: no matter what happens in life, that trust is not something she can break for me. I have trusted her in a way I have trusted very few people. Maybe no one. At times it even felt like I trusted her more than myself.

That did not happen for no reason.

That day, she earned something in my life. Properly earned it. Not because she said something nice. Not because she made some promise. But because she showed me something through who she was, through what she did, through the way she handled something for me. I won't decorate it beyond what it was. I just know that after that day, in my heart, a line disappeared.

The line of hesitation.

The line of filtering.

The line that makes you stop before saying something and think, *should I tell this person or not?*

With her, that line slowly stopped existing.

After that, I could tell her everything. My sadness, my happiness, old things, current things, things I had hidden, things I had said wrong before, even my own truths and lies that had passed through my life. I would just tell her. There was no need to prepare anything before saying it. No need to clean my thoughts. No need to make myself look better than I was.

I could just speak.

And she would listen.

That changed a lot.

Because there is a difference between talking to someone and feeling safe enough to not edit yourself in front of them. With most people, even if you are close, some part of you still remains careful. Some part still arranges the words before speaking. With her, that habit started going away.

It was not dramatic. It did not happen in one night.

But after that day, it kept becoming easier.

And we kept sharing things with each other like that.

Days passed. Then weeks passed. Then two or three months went by in that same rhythm. Talking, sharing, saying things openly, being there in each other's everyday life. By the time February came, something had become very obvious between us, even if we were still not saying everything directly.

We had become very attached to each other.

Even that word feels small for what it was becoming. Attached, yes. Addicted also, maybe in some way. Not in some toxic or exaggerated sense. I just mean that the habit of each other had become strong. We shared everything. What we felt, what we didn't feel, what happened in the day, what sat badly in the heart, what made us laugh, what made no sense at all. And she also told me everything. Properly. Openly.

That kind of closeness changes your day without asking you first.

You start reaching for the same person for everything.

You don't even decide it.

It just happens.

Then I remember 13th February too.

That day, there was a feeling in both of us.

But at that time, I was still in a relationship.

And because of that, there were things we could not just say freely to each other. Or maybe we could have, but I could not. There is a difference. The truth was there, but I was not in a place where I could handle that truth cleanly.

Still, that day she asked me.

She said something like, what is going on?

And I told her, “I think you started liking me.”

Even now, when I remember that moment, I can feel how direct it was. Not polished. Not hidden behind ten layers. Just there.

And she said yes. In her own way, but yes. That it was true.

The moment became real then.

Till that point, many things had been understood without being spoken. But once something is spoken, even a little, it changes shape. You can no longer pretend you imagined it.

And that is where my confusion stood fully in front of me.

Because somewhere, I liked her too.

That much had become impossible to deny.

But I had also been in a relationship with someone else for three years. And once that truth stood next to this truth, everything became messy in my head. I could not even properly answer one simple question to myself: who was I betraying?

Was I betraying the girl I was already with?

Was I betraying Ishuu by not speaking clearly?

Was I betraying myself by staying in something while feeling pulled somewhere else?

At that time, I genuinely did not know.

And when a person reaches that kind of confusion, outside advice only helps so much. At some point, you have to sit with your own heart, however uncomfortable it is, and ask it not what sounds right, but what is true.

That is what I tried to do.

I remember being very careful with that phase, not because I was wise, but because I was scared of giving the wrong answer too fast. I knew this much at least—that before I said anything properly to someone else, I had to confirm it to myself first. I could not just give a reply because a feeling was there in the moment. I had to know what it meant. I had to know what I was doing.

So I told myself that.

And I told her that too.

That I needed to understand myself before taking anything further.

And to be fair, she also tried in a very honest way. She did not push me carelessly. She also wanted the truth to become clear, not forced. She even said that I should spend time with my girlfriend, so I would understand properly. So I would know.

That matters to me till today.

Because anyone can ask for love.

Not everyone can step back and say, *go and understand your heart first*.

There was maturity in that. There was truth in that.

And maybe that is one more reason why my trust in her only grew.

I even went to meet my girlfriend then, because she had said it, because somewhere I also felt maybe that is the right thing to do. Maybe I need to check myself honestly. Maybe I need to see clearly instead of getting carried away by what I am feeling.

But even when I went, my mind was not there fully.

That was the hardest part to accept.

I was there physically, but in my head I kept thinking only about Ishuu. What she must be doing. Whether she had eaten. Whether she was okay. What she must be thinking.

And that is when something became clear to me in a way I could not escape.

This was something else.

Not casual.

Not confusion that would pass in two days.

Not some temporary pull.

Something else.

Something bigger than what I had been telling myself till then.

That realization did not make things easier.

It only made them more real.

Because once you know a truth, even quietly, you cannot unknow it.

Still, life did not stop there. We did not suddenly jump into some clean answer. It does not happen like that. Real life is

slower. More complicated. Feelings become clear before decisions do. Hearts reach somewhere before courage does.

And that is exactly where I was.

Knowing more than before.

Saying less than I needed to.

Trying to be honest.

Still not ready enough.

That phase stayed with me for months like that.

Close to her.

Certain in some places.

Confused in others.

Trying to hold everything without letting anything fall.

And maybe that is why when I look back at that time, what I remember most is not drama.

It is tension inside silence.

The kind where two people know something has changed, but life around them is still asking for patience.

By then, Ishuu was not just someone I spoke to every day.

She had become the person in front of whom I had stopped hiding pieces of myself.

And that is not a small thing.

Because once someone reaches that place in your life, the heart does not stay untouched for long.

Time didn't pause for us to figure things out.

Everything kept moving the same way on the outside. College, people, daily routines, small conversations with others—nothing looked different if someone was just observing. But inside, things were not the same anymore.

What I had understood, I could not ignore now.

Even if I wasn't saying it loudly, even if I hadn't taken any clear decision yet, I knew I was not in the same place as before.

And still... I did not rush.

That was important.

Because at that point, anything rushed would have been dishonest.

—

Then came 20th February.

That day stayed with me in a different way.

I remember we were talking, like we usually did. There was nothing unusual about how the conversation started. But somewhere in between, I said it.

I told her, “main tainu sachhi bahut zyada pasand karan lagg gaya.”

I had started liking you a lot.

There was no build-up.

No dramatic setup.

Just a straight sentence.

And the moment it left my mouth, I felt it settle. Not in a heavy way, but in a clear way. Like something that had already been true for a while had finally been spoken.

She didn't react the way I expected.

She didn't say something soft.

She didn't say something confusing.

She said one thing.

“Then choose one.”

That’s it.

Simple.

Direct.

No extra words.

And for a second, I didn’t have anything.

No answer.

Nothing ready.

Because until that moment, I had been living in a space where I could feel everything without having to define it. But that one line didn’t allow that anymore. It asked for clarity. It asked for responsibility.

And I wasn’t ready with it.

So I stayed quiet.

Not because I didn’t understand the question.

Not because I didn’t care.

But because I didn’t have an answer I could stand by.

I didn't say yes.

I didn't say no.

I just... didn't say anything.

And sometimes, silence itself becomes an answer.

Even when you don't intend it to.

She understood that.

Without me explaining.

Without me trying to justify anything.

She understood that my silence meant I hadn't chosen her.

Or at least, that I wasn't choosing her in that moment.

And maybe from her side, that was enough.

—

After that, something shifted again.

Not in the sense that we stopped talking.

We didn't.

Not in the sense that things broke.

They didn't.

But something had been placed clearly between us now.

A question had been asked.

And it had not been answered.

That changes the space between two people.

Even if everything else looks the same.

—

The strange thing is... our bond didn't weaken after that.

If anything, it stayed just as it was on the surface.

We still talked.

We still laughed.

We still shared things.

We still sent each other reels.

We still had those random conversations that didn't need any reason.

We still had those small fights, those teasing moments, those useless arguments that only made sense to us.

Nothing stopped.

And maybe that's what made it more complicated.

Because when something breaks, you understand it.

When something continues the same way after something important happens, it becomes harder to place it.

—

We were still happy seeing each other happy.

That never changed.

If she was okay, I felt okay.

If something good happened to her, it mattered to me.

And I knew it was the same from her side too.

We were not pulling each other down.

We were not creating pressure.

We were not trying to control anything.

We just wanted each other to be okay.

That was constant.

—

There were days when we would just walk.

Lectures would end in Khalsa College, and instead of leaving,
we would stay.

One hour.

Sometimes two.

Just walking.

No plan.

No destination.

Just walking and talking.

Those walks didn't feel like something special at that time.

They felt normal.

Like something you do when you don't have anywhere urgent
to be.

But looking back, those were the moments where things stayed
simple.

No distractions.

No one else.

Just two people talking without checking time.

And maybe that's why they stayed with me.

—

Even after that question... even after my silence... she didn't become distant in a harsh way.

She didn't punish me for it.

She didn't create unnecessary drama.

She stayed.

In her own way.

And that says something.

Because not everyone has the patience to stay in a space where things are not clearly defined.

—

At the same time, I was still carrying my own situation.

That part of my life hadn't disappeared.

And I knew that until I faced it properly, nothing ahead could become clear.

But knowing something and acting on it are two different things.

I was still in between.

Still holding both ends.

Still not fully stepping into one truth.

—

And that phase continued like that.

Close.

Real.

Unresolved.

We had become part of each other's everyday life in a way that didn't need explanation anymore.

It didn't need labels.

It didn't need confirmation.

It just existed.

And maybe that's why it stayed strong even when something important had been left unanswered.

—

If I say it simply, this is what it was:

We liked each other.

We cared about each other.

We understood each other in a way that was not common.

But we were not together.

And we were not separate either.

—

And that kind of space... it doesn't stay still forever.

At some point, it asks for a direction.

But at that time, we were still there.

Living it.

Not deciding it yet.

Chapter 4

I Broke Myself Trying to Save You



I still remember 7th August 2023.

That date stayed with me for a different reason. That day, I had made a video for my ex-girlfriend and sent it to her. Ishuu saw that video too, and she got very happy after seeing it. Not in a strange way, not awkwardly, just genuinely happy. But at the same time, she said one thing that stayed in my head.

She said, “kaash mere layi vi aivein kujh banaunda.”

It was a small sentence. Very normal on the surface. But I remembered it.

I don't know why some things stay with you exactly as they were said. This was one of those things. It did not leave my mind after that. I kept it with me. And later, I made a video for Ishuu too. A normal video, but not something casual for me. I took proper time on it. Three or four hours at least. I made it only to make her happy. I wrote things for it, arranged it, made it carefully.

I wanted her to feel that someone had done something like that just for her.

And when she saw it, she became very happy.

That happiness mattered to me more than the video itself.
Maybe nobody had done that for her before, maybe that is why
it touched her so much. I don't know. I just know she was very
happy, and seeing her like that made me happy too.

That day I had brought a cake as well. We cut the cake on video
call.

Even now, when I remember that day, what comes back first is
her smile.

Not the video.

Not the cake.

Not even the effort.

Just her smile.

The way she looked in that moment did something to me. It
stayed. It got fixed somewhere inside me and never really left.
Even today, that moment feels captured in me exactly the way
it was then.

And maybe that is why what came after felt even harder.

Because for a little while, I had seen her happy like that.

And then things started changing again.

I don't know how to say it except the way it felt to me at that time—like maybe my happiness got noticed by the wrong eye. Like the little peace I had found did not stay for long.

Someone came back.

An old wound opened again.

Something that had already hurt once... started hurting again.

I kept trying to handle that wound, to make things right somehow, to not let it spread again. But when something that was already broken gets hit again, it does not hurt in the same old way. It hurts deeper. That is what happened.

And in the middle of all that, I slowly started losing things.

My peace.

My rhythm.

My friendship in the way I knew it.

Almost everything started getting affected.

Still, I had made one promise to myself—whatever happened in life, I would not leave her. At least not in friendship. At least not by stepping back when things were hard. I had promised myself that much.

So I kept trying.

I started searching about that guy. I found out that he had come back again and was cheating Ishuuu again. I came to know that much. And after that, my whole focus became one thing only—how to protect her from that pain, from those things, from all of that mess.

I did not want her to go through that again.

I did not want her to break again.

I did not want her to feel alone in it.

But somewhere in trying to save her from all that, I think I started damaging myself.

Because the more I saw her, the more I saw her condition, the more I kept thinking about her. Constantly. Too much. Every time. I would think about what she must be going through, what she must be feeling, what was happening around her, whether she was okay, whether she was pretending to be okay. Those thoughts did not stop.

And slowly, I began changing.

Not in a good way.

I started leaving food.

I stopped eating properly.

I started hurting myself.

I was not doing all that because I wanted attention. I was not doing it to show anyone anything. I was just sinking badly inside my own head. I wanted to see her happy so much that somewhere I stopped taking care of whether I myself was okay or not.

That was the truth of that phase.

I was not living normally.

I was falling apart quietly.

And I don't even know when exactly her happiness came back, or whether it came back in the way I had prayed for it. I just know that during that time, I myself started forgetting things. I was not normal from inside. My mind was not settled. My body was not settled.

That was also the time when I went very close to Rab.

I remember that clearly.

I started believing in God in a way I had not before. I would go to the gurdwara daily. I would do paath. I would read Hanuman Chalisa too. I would stand and pray for her.

Properly pray. Not casually. I would ask only for one thing—
meri Ishuuu di khushi wapas kar do. Ohnu khush kar do.
Mainu meri Ishuuu khush chahidi ae.

That was my prayer.

Again and again.

I would sit in front of Rab and ask for her happiness. I would
ask to see her okay. I would ask to see us both together in peace
someday. All my prayers had started gathering around one
thing.

Her.

And maybe Rab did listen in some way.

Because she came back stronger.

She did become strong again.

She returned from that phase stronger.

But by then, I think for me, it had already become too late in
another way.

Because while she was becoming strong, I had become weak.

Very weak.

My health had started getting worse because I had stopped eating properly. My mind had gone into a dark place. I started going through depression. Anxiety started building. Panic attacks started coming. I was not able to handle things inside me. I was carrying too much and not releasing it anywhere the right way.

I wanted to cry openly.

That is one thing I remember very clearly.

I just wanted to cry properly.

But instead of that, everything inside me became harsher.

My life took a bad turn in that period. Even my brain circulation got affected to the point where doctors said maybe surgery might be needed. I started going to psychiatrists regularly. Sessions started. I was told I needed happiness in my life, that I needed to stay okay, that if I stayed mentally well then life would slowly come back into place.

But things had already changed too much.

And with all of that changing, one more thing happened.

I became completely distant from Ishuuu.

Totally distant.

I still remember the date of the last time I saw her.

25th November 2024.

That day I met her. And there was another boy there too. A sweet little boy. In the story, I'll recognize him as that only—a sweet little boy. That day, I handed over a kind of responsibility to him. My responsibility toward my friend. Because at that time I was going to doctors, I was not okay, and somewhere inside me there was only one fear—that she should never feel alone.

If I could not be there properly, then at least someone should be there near her.

Someone should stay.

Someone should make sure she doesn't feel by herself.

So I left her with him.

And that day, in a way, I walked out of her life.

Before leaving, I told her one thing.

“Ajj ton baad main tainu apni shakal nahi dikhawanga.”

And then I left.

Just like that.

Chapter 5

I Let You Go... But I Never Left You



After that, time kept passing in a strange way.

November had already become that last point where I had seen her. Then December passed. Then January passed. Then February too. In all that time, I did not put up snaps, did not post anything, did not do much of anything properly. Life was moving, but from my side it felt more like days were only getting over.

Then in February, we started talking a little again.

Not like before.

Not openly the way we used to.

Just thodi bahuti gall. Enough to know the silence had not stayed complete. Enough to know that even after everything, some thread was still there.

Then came March, and in March I met her.

We met one day. We spoke normally. Just normal conversations. The kind that sound simple from the outside, but for people who have gone through distance, even ordinary words carry their own weight. She had changed by then. Totally a different person in many ways. For some moments I could not even understand what place I had in her life

anymore. Whether I was still her best friend or not, I myself did not know.

But jo hoyá so hoyá.

I do not carry regret about that.

Life had already changed too much by then to sit and ask for old places back.

After that, her MSTs started, and during those days we would end up sitting close, almost near each other. We sat near, but even in that nearness there was a distance that both of us could feel. She used to get angry that I had come to college and had not told her. That thing hurt her.

But from my side, the reason was simple.

I did not want to disturb her life again.

That is why I never told her.

Still, from her side the feeling was this: had we really gone so far from each other that we could not even tell one another such a basic thing anymore? That we had become that separate?

And life kept changing like that. Quietly, then suddenly, then quietly again.

But one thing had not stopped from my side.

My planning.

That never stopped.

Because in my heart I had made up one thing clearly: even if I was not going to remain in her life the way I wanted, her dreams should still remain with her. Her dreams should not disappear. If I could not stand beside her fully, then at least I could still do something that would bring her happiness.

That is when I started working on what I wanted to make the best gift of her life.

I don't know how to explain that phase except by saying that once I started doing something for her happiness, things also started opening in strange ways. Maybe Rabb helps when the intention is clean. At that time I had become almost nastik in many ways, but even then it felt like something was still helping me.

I started messaging every influencer she followed on Instagram.

Each and every one I could find.

Daily messages.

Requests.

Emails.

Messages to managers.

Again and again trying to convince people.

Only for one purpose: that they should wish her, that they should do something that would make her happy. Little by little, I managed to convince some people. I got some of them to agree.

Then I made a video.

I made that video and sent it to Ishuu.

At that time we were not in contact properly. We were not talking. And I was about to go for surgery. Still, before going, I sent her that video. Along with that, I even wrote a song.

Even now that part feels strange to me.

A man like me, who says even today that he does not know how to write a novel properly, had written a song at that time. I don't know if it was good or not. I don't know if it was properly written or not. But I wrote it. I made it for her.

And on 31st May 2025, I sent her all of that.

She was very happy.

That much I know.

And even though she was away from me, she did not want me to go far. But I had to go. I had no choice then.

In June, when I was admitted there, I was in a very bad state. Very bad. Almost like I was lying there without much life in me. But in that phase, one thing I saw very clearly: she prayed a lot for me. Maybe more than I deserved, maybe exactly as much as she felt, I don't know. Even as a person who had gone far from faith in many ways at that time, I still saw this and could not ignore it.

She was praying for me.

She used to send me streaks daily.

I still have screenshots of those things.

Even now, sometimes when I see them, I smile.

Because they belong to a time when so much was broken, and still there was care.

Then after that, almost after one month, or around twenty-five days later, I came back.

And when I returned, she was very happy that I was back. Her feeling was simple: she just wanted to meet Rajveer.

So we met.

12th July 2025.

I remember that date too.

That day we met, and we were very happy. Properly happy. Life had started feeling right again for a while. Things were moving well. Whatever I used to ask for, at that time it felt like maybe it was finally coming true. My life felt like it was coming back on track. I had started feeling happy again.

I would keep seeing dreams of living life with her.

I used to stay busy trying to make her happy.

And she too was very happy in those days.

We remembered each other all the time. Hugs, “I miss you,” little things like that—those moments were there, and in those moments I was truly happier. It felt simple then. It felt possible then.

But as usual, I don’t know what happened in my life that things again started getting bad.

My own situation started worsening again.

And around that same time, another person entered her life.

That was something I did not want.

But at that time I was not fully okay with myself either.

Still, one thing never left me—my concern for Ishuuu.

That stayed.

The truth started showing itself. I felt that maybe Baba ji had again started saving me, or maybe saving both of us in some way. For one and a half months, maybe two months and fifteen days around that whole phase, I had remained almost as if on a death bed. I myself did not know whether I would live or not. Then I recovered and came back.

And when I came back, when Ishuuu saw me, I saw clearly that things had changed again.

A lot had changed.

Because that boy had changed many things in her life. Even if he had changed her world from the outside, my concern for her did not reduce. I kept asking Rab for one thing only—that if we have met again, then let me save her from this. Even after going from nastik to astik again in my own strange way, my prayer was still the same.

Ishuuu should be okay.

Whatever else happens, she should be okay.

And maybe that is the truth of my side of the story more than anything else.

Even when I was weak, even when life kept throwing me from one side to another, even when I had no proper control over my own health, my heart kept returning to the same place.

Her happiness.

And that is where this part of my life was standing then—between return and fear, between hope and another danger I could already sense, between getting one piece of my life back and realizing that something else might now have to be fought for.

After that, for me, the biggest thing was not even my own condition.

It was still her.

Even when I had come back, even when I had started feeling that life was coming back on track, my attention kept going towards the same place. Ishuuu. Whether she was fine. Whether things around her were fine. Whether the person who had entered her life was actually right for her or not. That thought did not leave me.

So I started researching about that boy too.

I did not do it for drama. I did not do it to interfere for no reason. I did it because my concern for her had not ended. And the more I looked, the more things started opening. Slowly, the reality of that boy started showing itself to me. At that time, I felt like maybe Baba ji was again helping me see what I needed to see. Maybe they were again trying to save me, or save her, or save both of us from something worse.

Because I had already come from a very bad phase.

For one and a half months, maybe two months and fifteen days around that whole period, I had remained almost as if I was on a death bed. I myself did not know whether I would live or not. Then I recovered and came back. And after coming back, when Ishuuu saw me, when I saw her, I could understand one thing very clearly—things had changed again.

A lot had changed.

That boy had already changed many things in her life.

Maybe from the outside people would not understand it the way I did, but I could feel it. And even if her world had changed because of that boy, my care for her had not changed. That stayed exactly where it always had been.

So again I turned towards Rab.

Again I started asking for one thing only.

That if we had met again, then let me save her from this too.

That prayer had changed many times in words, but not in meaning. Even when I had gone far from faith and then returned to it in my own way, the center of it stayed the same. Ishuuu should be okay. Ishuuu should be protected. Ishuuu should not break again.

And somewhere inside me there was also this feeling that if I could show her the truth, if I could show her the reality of that boy, then maybe I could save her before something worse happened. Even if her heart got hurt in seeing that truth, I still felt that a painful truth is better than a false life.

That was where my mind was standing then.

Not on my own happiness.

Not on what I would get.

Only on this—that she should know what is real.

And that is maybe the clearest thing about my side of the story. I kept returning to that same place, again and again. Her happiness. Her safety. Her truth.

That is why when I think of this whole story, I know there is still a lot I have not said. I forgot many things. I forgot many

gifts. I forgot many moments. There was so much more in between all this. But the reason I am writing all this is simple.

I loved her.

And when you love someone like that, many other details become small in front of one thing only—the person.

Her smile mattered to me.

That's it.

What the world said about her never mattered to me. People said many things. People judged her looks. People said foolish things. But none of that ever changed anything in me. My family liked her. I liked her. That was enough for me. My family's thinking was also simple—if I liked her, they liked her too.

And whenever I thought like that, whenever I looked at all the signs the way I had felt them, I would feel only one thing.

We were made for each other.

Maybe in the future. Hopefully. If life allowed it.

That is why this book is not just a story for me. It is a memory. Something that will stay with me. Something I would want to

give her too someday. So she knows that this was my side. This was how I lived it. This was how deeply it sat in me.

By 2nd March, I had reached a point where I felt this part of the story had come to an end in the way it could be told for now. On 1st March I told Ishuu. On 2nd March I brought that boy's reality in front of everyone. After that, whatever happened or will happen, I leave that with Baba ji, with Mahadev, with Hanuman ji. I have kept faith that they will do what is right.

Because even now, my wish has not changed.

I want Ishuuu to be happy.

That's all.

My own life, if I say it honestly, never felt separate from that. I used to feel that the life I wanted was the life Ishuuu wanted. That is how deeply I had tied my heart to her. Even when I was on a death bed, even when I had gone so low that I did not care whether I lived or not, that feeling stayed. For me, she still remained everything.

And maybe that is why I know I may never be able to tell her completely what she has been for me.

Maybe this book will say what I cannot say directly.

Maybe this novel will hold the things I could not speak properly.

And even if dreams remain incomplete from my side, I still want her to complete them. I want her to live them. I want her to be happy in her own life. I want Mahadev's grace to stay on her. I want her to keep smiling. I want the dreams I wrote in my diary, the ones I still remember, to come true for her.

So no, for me this is not really an ending.

This is only one part.

Because the truth is, the two and a half years I lived in this phase of my life felt bigger than the twenty-three years before it. In these years, I learned what love is. I learned how love changes a person. I learned what life feels like when it becomes real. That is why this part can end here, but the feeling does not end here.

I love her.

I love her the most.

And that has stayed unchanged in me.

Whatever happens ahead, that truth remains.

This story may not make sense to everyone.

Maybe some people will not understand it.

Maybe some people will only see broken pieces.

But these are my pieces.

This is my side.

This is my life.

And this is the story as I lived it.

If this part doesn't end here, then maybe the only right words
left are these:

to be continued.

Poetry Section

It will end with us



It didn't begin loudly.
You held my hand one day,
and something shifted—
softly, without asking.

I didn't understand it then.
Some things only become real
when you look back at them.

And when I do,
that moment still feels
like the start of everything.

“Are you happy?”

It was a simple question,
but it stayed.

Not because of the words,
but because of what I felt
while asking it.

Even now,
that question still carries you
in ways I cannot explain.

We started talking every day,
like it was nothing.

No effort, no planning,
just... you and me.

And somewhere in that routine,
you became my habit—
the kind that never feels heavy,
the kind you don't want to break.

We knew it.

Not loudly,
not clearly,
but enough to feel it.

And sometimes,
what stays unsaid
is what stays the strongest.

“Then choose one.”

You said it simply.

And I stayed silent.

Not because I didn't feel,
but because I didn't know
how to choose
without losing something real.

I didn't ask for much.

Just one thing—
that you stay happy.

Every time I stood there,
every time I folded my hands,
it was always the same.

Even now,
it hasn't changed.

I stepped away,
but not because I wanted to.

Sometimes leaving
is not about going far,
it's about not disturbing
what you care about the most.

And even in that distance,
you never felt far to me.

I don't remember every moment.
I don't remember every word.

But I remember this—
I loved you honestly.

And sometimes,
that is the only thing
that really stays.

You were never just
someone in my life.

You were the part
everything kept coming back to me.

Not loudly,
not forcefully—
just naturally.

Like you were always meant
to be there.

Time has moved.

Life has changed.

But some things don't.

The way I think of you,
the way I wish for you,
the way your happiness
still matters—

all of that
is still the same.

If this is where the story pauses,
then let it pause like this—
without noise,
without regret,
without trying to change
what it already was.

Some parts of life
are not meant to be finished,
they are meant to be felt
and carried forward.

What I lived with you
was never incomplete,
it just wasn't meant
to end in words.

I don't hold on
to what could have been.
I hold on
to what was real.

And what was real
was you—
your presence,
your voice,
the way you became
a part of my days
without asking.

Time will move,
life will change,
people will come and go,

but some connections
don't need endings.

They stay—
in quiet thoughts,
in unspoken wishes,
in the way
your happiness
still feels like mine.

So if this story
does not end here,
it's not because
something is missing.

It's because
some feelings
are not meant to end.

They just...
continue.

*And in loving her, I finally understood what my life
had always been trying to become.*