

THE RAIN I LOVE

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Stories Matter

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The Rain I Love is more than a story. It's a roller-coaster ride, where themes of love, family, aspirations, promises and sacrifices is explored through a journey that will leave you mesmerized. There are moments of immense happiness, a lot of fun and laughter, inescapable heartbreaks, breathtaking revelations, and everything you expect from an everlasting tale of love.

Love, itself is a word carrying a lots of meaning in it. Rain, is used as a metaphor here, for all the emotions that flows in when you are in love. The question is, what kind of love? You just cannot confine this feeling to one word or a meaning. Is it the love of Aarav, that personifies selflessness, or Yash, who is very proud of his relationship with Aasna, the girl that Aarav admires from the bottom of his heart? Is it Atul's love, who makes sure his son Aarav never feels the void of his demised mother, or is it Garima's love, sheer insecurity that her daughter Aasna should never depend on anyone in her life, not even her parents? Which love is going to prevail in the end?

In the end, the answer lies with the one who is loved. Aasna, who is she going to choose, and whose love is going to fill that void in her heart, for eternity? Aarav, Yash or Garima's expectation? Let's become a part of this beautiful ride and find it out!

Sahil Jeet Singh, a guy from Cuttack, Odisha, is trying to find his way in life, but for sure envisions to do something big in life. Life has shown him some of the toughest times, but he learned, evolved and gradually adapted to life, creating an identity of his own among his closed ones.

He is pursuing his Masters in Sociology from KIIT University. He has done his graduation in the same field and aims to be an author and journalist, but dreams to be a filmmaker. He has published his works in five anthologies before, which contain some of his short stories and poems.

This is the first time he has written a fictional novel, something which he never intended to. He has a simple passion for writing stories, which turned to be the reason why he started writing this story. But as his tale started shaping into a wonderful saga of love and inspiration, he couldn't stop himself and ended up making one of the most intriguing romantic drama he himself has ever seen, read, written or even imagined!

Perhaps, his love for movies, specifically romantic movies of Yash Raj Films, drove his mind into creating a triangular love story that isn't just beautiful, yet something that would leave a lasting impact in the heart and soul of the reader. Movies like Silsila, DDLJ, Mohabbatein, Veer Zaara and many have inspired him throughout his youth life, which also encourages him to write more intrinsic and aspirational tales of love in future.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the God of Universe, Shri Jagannath Prabhu, and the Goddess of Strength, Maa Durga. This story is an effort to glorify their immense greatness, to show the power of love a man can acquire by believing in the ideals of Shri Krishna and the resilience a woman can show and face every obstacle by worshipping the mother goddess.

I would like to thank my mother Sumila. She is the constant source for my inspiration, the strongest woman I have ever come across. I hope this work of mine brings a smile on her ever lively face. Thank you Mama, for everything.

I would like to thank my father Jeet, who left this invaluable skill in me to write my thoughts out, and everything he did for me, before leaving for his heavenly abode. I will forever be grateful to you Papa. Rest peacefully.

I would like to thank my family and friends, two people out of them especially. First is my grandfather (Dada Ji), a man whose life will inspire even a rock to turn into a mountain. Your teachings will encourage me till my last breath. Second is Omkar, or who I fondly call “Baba” (I am his son Azad; yes we are Jawan enthusiasts). A friend who is more like a big brother to me, he helped me throughout this journey and give life to this story. Thank you for igniting this writer in me to levels I never thought would be possible. I will support you in everything, I promise.

As I said earlier, I am a Jawan enthusiast, it means I have to thank him, for the impact he has had on the lives of those born in 90s and early 2000s. Growing up, his movies taught us how to love everyone, everything, your life most importantly. From being the “King of Romance”, to being called “Mass ka Baap” by his fans because of his action performances recently, he helped me make this story a beautiful tale of love and self realization. Thank you Shah Rukh Khan, for being my role model, you may not read this book, but whoever reads it and finds my admiration for you will make me feel as good as you reading it.

The winds are swiftly hitting the leaves on the trees. The rain is pouring down and on my body. The smell in the air is making me feel ecstatic, joyous, lively. The river down there is streaming down fast, and making sounds like chimes being hit. The range is speaking to me. My hands are stretched out. What is making me feel so beautiful? Yes, it's her. All of this is her, she is this mountain, it's trees, the birds chirping in the branches, the rain falling down, all of this is her. She is with me, no one can separate us. We are one, we are here together. I love this, I love her. She loves me. This is us.

"Wake up bro!", calls out Deepak, as Aarav was day dreaming a scene again in his mind.

"I was at peace, can't you tolerate that?", replied Aarav.

"Bro, day dream at home. We have so much work to do for this research.", says Deepak.

Deepak and Aarav were assigned a case study on a village. They were making a project on Satpura village, a small yet wonderful village just 10 kms away from the city they lived.

"Hmm, Deepak you know, there's a beautiful mountain range around the village. The village is protected by that range, and the people get various resources for their daily life from that mountain range.", says Aarav.

"Yes, I do know, but that isn't the part of our study. Focus on what we have given. You have to write about the history and economy of the village, and I will write about the art and crafts of the village.", says Deepak.

"I think we must visit those mount~", Aarav was proposing an idea about the case study, suddenly his eyes caught the sight of someone.

"There you go, dreams coming true, for few seconds.", says Deepak, as he knew who interrupted his friend.

Walking up from the other side, was a girl, who Aarav feels is everything for him. This is a sight, Aarav always comes to college for. It was Aasna, the love of Aarav's life, who sadly doesn't love him back.

But as she stepped in talking to her friend, without noticing Aarav, one end of her dupatta got caught with Aarav's buckles of his watch. Aarav is startled, didn't know what to do, Aasna kept walking and Aarav kept walking behind her.

Deepak, panicked, is trying his best to stop Aarav. With a trembling voice, the lover gets the courage to say it.

"Aasna! Wait.", Aarav said.

This was the first time he spoke to her, in 3 long years! His heart was thumping loud. Aasna looked into his eyes, for the first time too. She knew about him, and avoided him all this time. But today, fate had different plans!

Aasna, as always, has reluctant look. But as she saw her dupatta stuck in the buckles of Aarav's watch, she was dumbstruck.

"On what world was this supposed to happen?", she thought to herself as she walked up to Aarav to take out the end of her dupatta from the buckles.

Aarav meanwhile, was lost. He couldn't believe at what he was seeing. Aasna never stood this close to him before. He looked into her perturbed eyes focused on getting the threads she struggles to take out of his watch, but all Aarav saw was Aasna's beauty, her eyes, ovals of liquid moonlight, met at the bridge of her nose, a slender arch that seemed to kiss her small, cupid's bow mouth, with her lips ever so slightly curved, formed the most beautiful face he ever saw.

Aasna didn't say anything, but her face said it all. She was bit unhappy about this, not much. As she was walking out after freeing her cloth from his wrists, Aarav had to speak up.

"Aasna... what makes you dislike me so much? I haven't done anything to you. This was an accident.", says Aarav insistently.

"I don't dislike you, I just want to keep distance from you", Aasna replies.

Aarav calms down a bit, smiles and speaks.

"That's fine, but I have noticed, whenever you see me around, you have either a look of ignorance or you feel a bit annoyed. Why Aasna?", asks Aarav.

"You don't need to know, you don't annoy me, it's just that... that. ...", Aasna stutters.

"That it would be troublesome if Yash... I am sorry", says Aarav.

Aarav had to calm himself before his agitation made him speak something absurd. Aasna sighed, with a little smirk on her face, understanding his zeal.

"You will never find your answers this way. There's nothing like I hate you or something, it just doesn't feel right to... hurt you.", says Aasna.

Saying this, Aasna walked away with her friend.

"Hurt me? What makes her feel that she will hurt me?", Aarav was puzzled.

"Bro, she doesn't hate you! If she was annoyed because of you, then she could have said it to your face... isn't it?", says Deepak.

"Yes... but.. ", Aarav thinks.

"But that's the reason she remained quiet all this time, she didn't want to hurt you by being harsh with you!", says Deepak.

He comes up with a theory, which may lighten Aarav's burden a bit.

"Is it? Then why would her insecure lover call me and threaten me like he really has the guts to do anything with me?", says Aarav.

"Maybe that's just his way of dealing with you, being aggressive. But this is Aasna's way of dealing with you, just don't talk to you.", says Deepak.

"Wow, what a couple. Two different poles of magnet. Well that attracts each other, according to physics. But really, Aasna didn't want to hurt me! I hope, there is some hope. Anyways... let's get back to our project. I was saying... we must visit the mountains. I am sure they are beautiful.", says Aarav.

"If you say, then it is, let's go, this Sunday.", Deepak agrees.

Aarav just discovered something, which may change his life! He was totally wrong when he thought Aasna didn't like her. It was her nice being that decided to keep it quiet. She was right, Aarav was almost ready to explode with his questions. Where is this going? Aarav might find his answers soon.

Aasna reached her home after her day at college. She kept her bag down and lied down on the bed. She takes out her diary and as everyday she keeps the notes of the things happened daily in college, she writes down today's experience.

"Dear Diary, today was fair day in college. Classes happened, I only did the Honours class, didn't do other classes to work on our case study in the library. I met Anjana and Sarika today. With Sarika, I talked about a lot of things. Got a phone call from my super sincere boyfriend Yash, who was making sure if I was doing good. Professor had some great advice for me today, not regarding studies or case study, but a life lesson. Sometimes people don't really know how to express themselves. They tend to stay back and keep things to themselves. It's a feeling which may build strongly in their hearts and minds. But remember, the more they keep it to themselves, the urge to say it or do something about that feeling, grows impeccably. So never keep your feelings so much to yourself, that a time will come, it may start to hurt you. This brings me to an accident which happened today out of nowhere. I have told you about a boy named Aarav, who I believed stalks me in the college, well today, my low end of dupatta got stuck in his wrist watch buckles. I took it out, and as I was leaving, he asked me a question, to which I had to answer in a way that doesn't makes him feel bad. No matter how I feel about Aarav, I can't make him feel bad because of me. The way he talked, I sensed, he really feels for me, but the inner frustration has hurt his feelings to a level, it feels like looking at a beaten up person trying to save you from being hit by the source of his pain. Aarav needs to understand, I am not the one. Why does he love me to this day, after being harshly warned by Yash, two times? I see, he is not just a lover, he is fighting for his feelings. But he won't be able to win this battle. Please, someone needs to tell him, he won't make it. I can't see someone having hopes for me, to have nothing. It is not good for him. God, show him the right path. That's all for today, will see you tomorrow... Aasna".

Aasna couldn't think of anything else for the moment. She was not okay with Aarav trying to achieve something he may never have. For

the first time, she is thinking about Aarav. She isn't petty, she isn't unhappy, neither she is worried. She just doesn't know what to do about it. She didn't stress it much, got up, washed her hands, went for the lunch, freshen ups and goes to rest, with music in her ear plugs.

Aasna was hearing her favourite song, that's when a call came. And not to her surprise, it was her boyfriend, Yash.

"Han Yash, just had my lunch.", says Aasna.

"Did my sweetie eat well?", says Yash.

"Yes Baba, stomach is full from top to bottom, was going to take a rest.", replied Aasna.

"Acha. How was your day today?", asks Yash

"It was just fine. Nothing much... yep... nothing much.", says Aasna, as she instantly got reminded of her meeting with Aarav.

"Are you hiding something? Say it Aashu, is it Aarav again!?", says Yash eagerly.

"Calm down! Just an accident, my dupatta got stuck in his buckles.", says Aasna.

Aasna wanted to share this peacefully... but Yash is definitely heated up a bit.

"What! His belt buckles, what was he try—", says Yash, agitated.

"NO! It was his wrist watch, and it really was an accident. He was just talking to his friend, I walked past him, and the winds did the job. Yash you really think he is gonna act like a Bollywood hero in front of everyone?", says Aasna humorously.

"Bollywood heroes don't have that it factor. What I imagined was some Bhojpuri music video stuff. I am sorry Aasna. (Both laughed) Well what happened after that.", says Yash.

He was calmed, but he had to know how Aasna and Aarav met this accident.

"I took it off... and.. nothing. I walked away.", says Aasna.

She is a bit worried how Yash would react after hearing what happened next.

“Aasna, something has happened that has been worrying you, please tell me. Did Aarav hurt you?”, says Yash.

“He didn’t hurt me! He just asked me... why do I hate him. I really didn’t know what to say.”, says Aasna.

“He should know why! Anyways what did you reply?”, says Yash.

“I said Aarav what was true, I don’t hate him, I don’t dislike him. I just want to stay away from him.”, Aasna replied.

“You didn’t hate him? I thought you always did.”, says Yash.

“Why would I? We never talked to each other until today. He is a good human. Even you know it.”, says Aasna.

“Yes, I have told him. He is a good guy. He just needs to stop loving you.”, says Yash.

“Let him love Yash. He is a tough lover, his feelings can’t be broken. 3 years, he still feels the same way. Its kinda... beautiful.”, says Aasna.

“Beautiful? Obsession in my dictionary. 3 years, and two harsh warnings on my side. Still the same thing. I won’t allow him to take my beautiful jewel. I have earned it.”, says Yash.

“Wait, something is happening in the lane, let me check.”, says Aasna.

As she was speaking, she heard some group of people singing something, outside her balcony.

“What happened Aasna, is someone there?”, asks Yash puzzled.

“Yash, I will call you back in some time.”, replied Aasna.

“Aasna, call me in the evening, go and take a rest now. Bye. Love you.”, says Yash.

“Love you too, bye!”, says Aasna.

Aasna kept the call, removed her ear plugs, got out of the bed, went to her balcony and down there, she saw a group of five young people, jamming to her favourite song... “O Meri Laila”. What staggered her, was Aarav sitting in that group. A girl was playing the guitar, she was her best friend Prerna. Prerna saw her up there as they were singing out.

“Hey Aasna, these are my cousins! Want to join in?”, says Prerna.

“No Perna... I am fine.”, says Aasna.

As soon as he heard that name, Aarav stopped singing. Now what he heard singing loud, was his heart. As he grasped the courage, he looked up, and standing was “his Laila”, Aasna. This is the first time they met outside their college. But to not make it look awkward, she waved at Aarav. Aarav waved back, slowly, in disbelief.

There were two more girls and a boy in that group. They kept singing to Perna's vocals. But at the right part... Aarav stopped his cousin Perna and her friends. He took a deep breath, and closed his eyes. Aasna was looking down at him, figuring out what he is going to do... Aarav sings the next lines on his own... with full emotions.

Band aakkhein karu

Din ko raatein karu

Teri zulfon ko sehlaake baatein karu

Ishq main... Baaton... se ho meethi si

Naraaziyaan

His voice was as beautiful as Atif Aslam sung it originally. There was pause for a moment. Aasna smiled subtly but it was still, the happiest smile ever. And with that, Perna started playing the guitar again, and everyone started singing the last lines. As they ended the song, all were super joyous and clapping for each other. Except Aarav, who was having his moment looking at Aasna. Aasna, for the first time, was seeing Aarav with the eyes of happiness. She walked off smiling. Went into her room, and laid on the bed, holding her head, and laughing hysterically.

“What a fool!”, says Aasna, as she kept laughing and eventually went asleep.

“How do you know her bloke?”, says Perna.

“College. She is my Laila... I am the Majnu”, says Aarav softly.

“But she is in~”, says Perna.

She was going to say about her relationship but Aarav interrupts.

“Han pata hai, don't ruin my mood. Well I will leave. I will talk to you later on Perna.”, says Aarav.

“Oh... Am I in trouble?”, says Prerna, as she started messing with his brother.

“A big one!”, says Aarav amusingly.

They had a good laugh as Aarav left. This was unbelievable! So much happened in a day between Aarav and Aasna! The fate really went on Aarav's side. Yash is seen to be very protective of Aasna. Aasna loves him for sure. But where is this new found problem with Aarav is going to take her? Is this a start of a new story, a story which Aarav wanted to live for years? A story which Aasna avoided for a long time. A story Yash never wished come true! What is going to happen?

Aarav, Deepak and even Prerna, packed their bags and are ready to visit the beautiful mountain range outside their city. Prerna had her own bike, and Aarav took his bike and took Deepak on it. They started their journey at 5 am in the morning, because it will take them at least 1½ hours to reach their destination from their home. They stopped at a tea stall for some tea and a good amount of biscuits. An amazing journey began on a road with no other vehicle ends on the gate where you have to let the guards know and book yourself tickets to hike on the mountain. After taking the tickets, they hiked for a long time, gossiping and laughing about random stuff. They found a very apt spot for putting a mat and take some rest. They took out their jukebox and started playing some light music. Prerna and Deepak continued doing their non sensible fun gossip, Aarav though a nature lover, and knew he was in the place of dreams, decided to take a walk.

“Deepak, Preru... I am going to explore this range a little bit more. Stay here, and wait for me. I will be back in some time.”, says Aarav.

“Ae Aarav, don’t get lost, or else Kaku will eat me alive.”, says Prerna.

Deepak laughed his arse off, Aarav was dumbfounded, because they were boys.

“What the hell are you saying! Eat... alive... Chee!”, Aarav revolted, in hilarious manner.

Prerna quickly realized what these boys perceived of her words.

“This is the reason women live longer than men. Their mind is a garbage can. Aarav stay away from this idiot Deepak. He is influencing you negatively.”, says Prerna jokingly.

“You evil witch, I might be an idiot, but not a wreck like you.”, says Deepak.

Aarav left both of them fighting there. He scorched throughout the mountain. The hikers who came here before, pointed out some of the best picnic spots in the range. Aarav kept walking through the greenery of the mountain. He was mesmerized by the long trees above him, scattered early morning sunlight, the birds subtly chirping to wake the

humans up, the winds, everything! He found a picnic spot, which was actually a cliff on the far side of the mountain. It was green and had two huge trees, making it a perfect picnic spot. Just below it there was a smaller cliff, so it was pretty impossible to fall off. Something made Aarav feel this one place very familiar. It definitely looked like something from his dreams. But something much more real was about this place what Aarav felt he knew about, like he was actually here before. He didn't stress it much, he went in there, stood in the middle of the cliff for some time, feeling the beautiful nature, then sat under one of the trees... and starts singing his favourite song, which one? The one he sang outside Aasna's house the other day! He kept singing until he went a bit asleep.

"Hey Aarav, don't run around, be careful!", says a man with a bold voice.

He is Atul, Aarav's strict, but caring father.

"Yes Papa!", says a little Aarav, an adventurous brat.

"Aarav, don't run so fast! I can't catch you!", says Prerna, who seems to be an adorable little girl.

"Don't worry Prerna, I am surrounding him from this side, you do it from there. We won't let him run away!", says another little girl.

Unfortunately, Aarav never saw her face properly in his similar dreams before.

"Two girls ganging up on a five year old notorious boy, this sounds good. Go my little angel! Catch him with Prerna!", says another man.

He seems more fun to be around. He is Varun, Prerna's father.

"Varun bhaiya, did you just call my son notorious? You have grown some balls don't you?", says Atul.

"Hey Atul, I know you are a lawyer, don't act like one here. We have come here with our kids to have fun.", says Varun.

"More than that, he just called my daughter angel over his own daughter Prerna.", says a third man with them.

He seems to be more wise, someone who can stand for his daughter no matter what happens. He is Gaurav, must be the father of the other girl playing with Aarav and Prerna.

“Gaurav, I feel he needs a good smack.”, says Atul.

“Hey, Atul, Gaurav, I was just joking. Stop messing with me... we are grown up fathers now. Aaaa!”, Varun exclaims.

“WAIT! Leave Varun uncle alone!”, says the girl playing with the cousins.

She stood valiantly, challenging the big men as if she is ready to fight them.

“There’s my girl! Uh... I mean yours Gaurav. Thank you beta!”, says Varun.

“She doesn’t like to see fights..... Aah! Aasna, fine... your father is going to do what you say.. Okay!”, says Gaurav.

This is none other than Aasna! What a cute warrior!

“Preru.. (whispers) not the first time our dads acting stupid. Hehe!”, says Aarav.

“What did you just say Aarav?”, asks Atul.

“Ah.. Nothing Papa!”, Aarav replies.

“I heard it! Come here!”, says Atul as he chases his son.

“Oye Aarav! You are dozing off here! We were looking for you for half an hour!”, says Deepak, who woke an asleep Aarav up.

Aarav wakes up and realized what made him feel this place known. He is surprised! He is in disbelief! He holds Deepak tight and got up. Prerna held his hands, and he was shivering. She checked if he is well, he is fine. Aarav is shocked to shell! Now he knows why he always day dreamed about this place. Now he knew what makes him feel so lively here! These mountains, indeed was the first place, he met... the woman he loves now dearly! Aarav and Aasna met here!

“What is going on Aarav!? Why are you shivering?”, asks a worried Prerna.

“Prerna! Do you remember we have come to this range before? Please say you know! Please!”, pleads Aarav.

“Have we come here, before? I don’t think so.”, says Prerna, as she obviously can’t remember anything.

“Try to recollect your memories! We were five year olds, me, Papa, you & your parents, and someone else came to this place... this very cliff, this picnic spot. We had a great time here!”, says Aarav, as he begs Prerna to remember something if not the whole event.

“Prerna, he has again seen some random scenario in his dreams, believe me. You need water Aarav, take a sip.”, says Deepak, as he believes Aarav is bluffing and something is wrong with his body.

“No! I remember we were here, Prerna... you, me and.. and”, says Aarav, but is too nervous to reveal this, as he stutters.

“And who! Me you and who was here? Aarav what are you talking about!”, says Prerna.

“Me, you and... Aasna. All three of us were kids. And we came to this place to have a day out. We were with our parents!”, Aarav finally said it.

“Aasna...? Prerna, I am telling you this is just one his dreams where he went 15 years back and is playing with you and Aasna... yes Aasna! Bro you met her in college for the first time.”, says Deepak.

He was sure that Aarav is making it up. But Aarav is adamant about his memory.

“I SAID WE WERE HERE AND I KNOW IT!!! PLEASE BELIEVE ME PRERU!”, says Aarav.

“Alright, let me think. Me and Aasna have been together since childhood, because we are neighbours and our fathers are friend since college.”, says Prerna, as she is trying to connect the dots.

“Yes! And when I was five years old, I vividly remember I came to visit Indore, our beautiful hometown, from Mumbai, where me and Papa lived before.”, says Aarav, helping Prerna to remember about the event.

“Yeah... you and Kaka lived with us. And we did go to a lot of places.”, says Prerna.

She is now remembering the whole visit of Aarav and Atul.

“We also came here, to this mountain range, to this spot, had our tent!”, says Aarav, talking about what he saw in his dream just now.

“Yes... I don’t know if it was here, but we did come for a picnic.”, says Prerna, slowly recollecting that day.

“Oh I see! Maybe even Aasna and her family, because you all were neighbours, accompanied your families. And all of you must have had a great time!”, says Deepak.

He is trying to use his detective instincts, which he believes he has learned from a famous crime show C.I.D, but he is doing it just to keep him in the conversation right now.

“What was I wearing in your dream Aarav? Can you tell me exactly what was I wearing?”, says Prerna.

“I think, you wearing a blue and white striped top with a small denim shorts.”, says Aarav.

“Boom! That’s my dress which now my niece wears! That was one of my favourites!”, says Prerna, quickly identifying her dress from childhood.

“That’s it! But are you sure, the other girl in your dream was Aasna, or some other cousin of yours?”, Deepak interrogates.

“How can I ever get the face of the girl I love wrong?! I always liked this girl when we met during our visit here. Now I know why I loved Aasna the moment I met her in college. It’s because, I was searching for my childhood friend. It was not just a search for her, I was looking out for the person, who made feel wonderful that day, when we were playing on this beautiful cliff covered with the same grass and trees as it is now.”, says Aarav.

He has now realized it. He was destined to love Aasna.

“Wow, a lot of things are trying to bring you closer to her. This place just might be that one thing. Aarav, your fate is definitely taking you somewhere!”, says Deepak, trying to motivate Aarav.

“Be careful Aarav! Sometime, things aren’t meant to happen the way you want. I am not saying to not to have feelings for Aasna. But maybe,

it's just not worth it. She already is in relationship.", says Prerna, who chooses to bend towards reality.

"My love isn't just like any love. I was looking for this love, and in turn this love made me walk on this path. I won't lose hope. I will bring Aasna here, make her reminisce that we have already shared a moment together, a beautiful one. We aren't strangers. We aren't different. We are one.", Aarav is determined.

Aarav now looks to finally carve his way to make Aasna realize how much he loves her. Deepak and Prerna have never seen him this passionate for something before. Deepak wants to join him in this ride and help Aarav reach his destination. Prerna though, looks concerned about his brother. She fears that he might fail in his efforts. Will Aarav get his reward when Aasna finally accepts what she is trying to stay away from all this time, and that there's something between her and Aarav?

Aarav reached his home back around 11 am and took some rest in his room. After an hour, he came down the stairs in his drawing room. Atul, a former lawyer in the high court now a law professor in the most renowned law college of the city, returns home.

“Aarav, when did you return?”, asks Atul.

“Just an hour ago Papa.”, replies his son.

“How was the outing? Did Perna go out of control? And that Deepak, did he return your ₹500 which he took two months ago?”, says Atul humorously .

“Papa! Everyone was fine... and he didn’t return my 500 rupees rather he gave me a treat worth 500 rupees two weeks ago in a restaurant. But, Papa, do you remember you went to those mountains a long time ago.”, says Aarav.

“Aree Aarav, I have gone to that place for millions of times when I was of your age and even when I was younger than you. Which one are you talking about?”, says Atul.

“Papa, I am talking about the one in which me and you went with Perna, Varun Chacha and Tanuja Chachi, and one of Chacha's friend and his family. Me and Perna were around 5-6 years old.”, says Aarav.

“Ah, it was the trip when we came to visit our hometown from Mumbai... yes yes... I remember that trip. That was fun. You, Perna and the other girl, what’s her name... what is Gaurav daughter’s name... yes... Aasna. Yes... all of you had a great time. That little girl must have grown up. I haven’t talked to him in awhile... Acha kiya yaad dila diya ek puraane dost ka... But why were you asking about it?”, says Atul,

He had no idea the little girl he just talked about, is his son's lifeline.

“Just to make sure if this was my first or second trip to those mountains. I would love to go back.”, says Aarav, covering up his real reason well.

He is mesmerized by the fact that he has already a moment to cherish with his lady love. He wants to make more of them. But there was an obstacle, and that obstacle... is going to be very close to him today.

Bell rings

“Aarav, I will go and open the door, you wait here. I called some students of mine. They will do their extra studies here itself.”, says Atul hesitantly.

That’s your typical professional and an experienced lecturer, who doesn’t want to use the term “tuition”.

When Atul opened the door, the first person who got in the house, was the person... who Aarav never wanted to come across. He is frozen, not because he is afraid, which he is not. He is just shocked and thinking, “what the hell is he doing here?”. But this person, always wanted to confront Aarav. For 3 years he wanted to meet him, and wanted to give him a message, either through his words, or by his actions. Looks like he chose the former. And he is here, in Aarav’s house. He is none other than, Aasna’s boyfriend, Yash. The moment he saw Aarav, he had a subtle smile on his face, a sly cunning grin that might just creep people out a bit. Other students walked in and as Atul started chatting with them, Yash walked towards Aarav. Both stared down into each other’s eyes for seconds, the mental conflict can be seen already. Yash speaks first.

“Hi Aarav. First time seeing you in person, feels good. Haha, don’t worry, won’t hurt you in your own house. How are you?”, says Yash.

The intentions are clear, war is a necessity for the kings to establish their might.

“Hmm.. was feeling great, unless you showed up. You can’t even touch me, no matter where we are, together. Well, if my home was the first place of our meeting, we can just talk it out. Can’t we?”, says Aarav.

Seems like the rulers going for diplomatic talks, for the well being of both states.

“Don’t know about that. But these extra classes, was my idea. You reached Aasna’s house, I step into your house. Hisaab baraabar.”, says Yash.

“Hmm, good job. You using something called brain is surprising. That’s impressive.”, says Aarav, replying the nemesis savagely.

“Yash, do you know my son? I didn’t knew you both were friends!”, says Atul, interrupting the boys for good.

“Papa, we aren’t friends. But we are definitely, two men walking on similar paths.”, says Aarav.

“Yes, we definitely are Sir, and our goal is one.”, says Yash, a bit assertively.

“Looks like some nuclear war is brewing in here, I must stay away. Anyways Yash and others, go to that room and sit, I’ll be there in minutes. Aarav, make sure you don’t cause any trouble when I am in the class.”, says Atul jokingly.

He wasn’t serious here. He likes messing with his son.

“Trouble? I feel there will be too much of it. No seriously, don’t worry Papa, I am not going to trouble you.”, says Aarav.

This is might just be the beginning of troublesome times!

“I will make sure, there isn’t any scope for trouble to occur at first place.”, says Yash, decisively.

Atul just stared at both of them, but couldn’t figure out this animosity between his son and his student. Both still had that smile, the smile of pride. Looks like Aarav and Yash are just meant to be rivals. And they wholly accept it! That’s why both of them were as modest as possible in their first but tense meeting. Aasna must have just casually shared about her meeting with Aarav when Perna and him were jamming her and Aarav’s favourite song. Yash could’ve chose to break in and smash Aarav’s head, but instead he booked his ticket into the Aarav’s privacy, through his father! Atul stood in the middle of the room, as he watches his son leave.

“Aarav, how do you know Yash? I can’t ask him much, come on tell me.”, says Atul.

“Well, there’s a long story Papa. If I start, your students would have to stay here for the lunch.”, says Aarav.

Atul laughs a bit, puts his hands on Aarav’s shoulder, and speaks.

“Beta, I really sense some grudge between you and Yash. Is there something between the both of you?”, asks Atul humbly.

“Papa, its not something between us, its just that, there is someone between us.”, says Aarav.

And with that, Aarav was on the verge of revealing a secret that almost shook Atul’s mind. Aarav never kept anything secret from his father. Atul coughs out of shock and realizes he must indulge into this conversation.

“Fine Aarav, lets hope both of you become good friends from here. I’ll see you in an hour.”, says Atul.

“Sure Papa, I guess, I’ll go to the terrace. The weather is nice outside.”, says Aarav.

As Atul walks into the room where his students are seated, Aarav goes up to the terrace, and feels mesmerized by the pleasant weather this morning. No scorching heat, monsoon winds blowing swiftly, something Aarav prefers over a full blown rain or the continuous, slow rain that irritates many people.

As he walks on the terrace bare foot, feeling the placidly cool surface of the floor, he starts humming a song that matches the vibes that surrounds. A very underrated, yet beautiful masterpiece from the movie Veer Zaara, “Kyon Hawa”. And of course, this Veer has only one Zaara who he thinks about, that is Aasna. For the next hour, he goes on from just walking to swiftly opening his arms, twirling and dancing around murmuring this song, lost in his world. A lady in the neighbourhood looked at him from her terrace and is completely confused what has gone wrong with him.

Aarav’s beautiful rhythm breaks apart when he sees Yash leaving his home with his classmates. Aarav notices Yash resting both of his arms on two girls walking along with him, and chit chatting about stuff he has no interest in listening. The very act of him doing that infuriates Aarav as he is someone who doesn’t even talk to girls if they don’t start the conversation, yet Yash is the Razaa here who has his Zaara. Will this change for Aarav? Hope he doesn’t meet the fate of Veer!

“What the hell! He is now going to come to your house every Wednesday and Friday?”, says Deepak. He was shook hard by the revelation of the fact that Yash met Aarav at his home.

Aarav and Deepak are in their college.

“Yeah, Deepak, the war has begun.”, says Aarav.

“War? What war bro, what war? He is now watching your every step... Why man! Aaarghh! I will choke him out!”, says Deepak. He is angry because he really wanted to help Aarav win Aasna's heart. Now he has lost all hopes.

“What are you fuming about? Stop it! Let him watch my actions, I will do what I have to do in front of his eyes. I don't fear him, he was much worse than I expected! I wanted him to explode on me and finish the thing. But he chose a way, which isn't his cup of tea.”, says Aarav.

“Much worse, that means, is he a good challenge for you? You always expected him to be a raging bull, but he showed you some resistance!”, says Deepak.

“Yash knows what he is doing. He knows I might just become friends with Aasna. So he has decided not to eliminate me from the race, but to race with me till the end.”, says Aarav.

“But still, the person who disgusts you the most, is going to visit your house two days in a week. Nah man!”, says Deepak.

“He isn't Aasna's brother or father that I will just stay away from her now just because he is watching me. Speaking of father, Papa is trying to get in touch with Aasna's father.”, says Aarav.

“Wait... WHAT? Why is uncle looking for her father, shaadi ki baat abhi se?”, says Deepak humorously.

“Arey hatt! He just wants reunite with his old friend, they did meet in that trip.”, Aarav reminds Deepak.

As both were talking in the corridor walking together, they got into a room for their class. This was the class for the elective paper. In that class, these two lads would sit with her friend Sarika, Aasna. Aarav as

always, trembles a bit at first. But he still gathered his confidence and sits the row right near Aasna. Aasna was taken aback, but didn't had any reaction that would make Aarav regret. Both sat still, didn't talk or see each other, unless Aarav couldn't hold it anymore and look towards her. Aasna just rolled her eyes bit towards him and smiled. Aarav was on top of the moon. Suddenly Aasna's phone rang. She picked it up. Deepak and Aarav knew who it could be, but they were wrong.

"Papa I am in the classroom, the lecturer hasn't arrived yet.", says Aasna.

She got a call from her father. He is Gaurav Sharma, manager of one of the most popular restaurant chains in India. A very renowned person in his field. But his identity is as recognizable as finding an American player in the cricket team of USA.

A sudden concern rushed into Aarav's veins.

"Deepak, what if Gaurav uncle her ask anything about me? How should I react?", asks Aarav.

"You must RUN!", says Deepak.

"Yes, I just talked to his father, and the moment he said he studies in your college, I was pretty happy.", says Gaurav on call.

"Okay, I am glad to hear that you reunited with an old friend.", says Aasna.

"Sure. Does he study with you?", says Gaurav.

"Uhm.. (Looks at Aarav) yes Papa, he does.", replies Aasna.

Aarav was staggered. The father and daughter are talking about him.

"Do you want to talk to him?", Aasna asks, perplexed.

"Thats it! You are done bro!", Deepak whispers.

"Shut up dude! Be positive for once in life!", says Aarav

"He is right here.", says Aasna.

Deepak held his bag tight and was ready to run away. Aarav didn't know what to do. He felt like this is the end. Aasna started walking towards him with the phone talking to her father who is on line. Aarav is scared to death right now!

“Yes Papa, I am giving him the phone. (To Aarav) Hi... my father wants to talk to you. Don't act weird!”, says Aasna, as she gives her phone to Aarav.

Aarav can be seen shivering. Deepak couldn't stay there anymore. He sprints out of the class. Aasna and her friends stared at the retreating Deepak completely puzzled. Aarav cursed Deepak quietly, before answering the call.

“Hello, is this Aarav?”, says Gaurav.

“Yes Uncle. Namaste. I am Aarav.”, says Aarav.

He stood still. anxious about the sudden turn of events. A day ago he wasn't talking to Aasna, today he is talking to her father!

“Aarav! Remember me, Gaurav uncle? Haha... your father Atul just contacted me after so many years. I was mesmerized. We had always remained in touch even after your childhood visit, but through mails and then social media. Hearing his voice after almost 15 years was delightful. And I can sense that I am not talking to that notorious little boy of 5. I am definitely talking to a grown up young man. Isn't it?”, says Gaurav.

He wanted to talk to Aarav because he just talked to an old friend, Aarav's father Atul. Aarav was relieved to a level that couldn't be explained.

“Indeed uncle, time really flies fast. It feels like that trip happened yesterday. Coming back here was the best decision we made. Meeting you all (looks at Aasna) is a blessing in disguise.”, says Aarav.

“True, I called Aasna to tell her to be friends with you, like your father and I are. But as I got a chance to talk to you, I am saying it to you, be her friend. Help each other whenever needed. If you need any advice or help, I am always there for you beta.”, says Gaurav.

“Sure uncle. We have known each other well. I will definitely be a good friend to her. You trust me, I will keep it to the last breath.”, says Aarav.

Aasna had her eyes wide open thinking what are these two men talking about? Friends?

“Now that’s a grown up speaking! Looks like your classes will begin, I will talk to you afterwards, just take my number from your father. Okay beta, god bless you.”, says Gaurav.

“Thank you so much uncle, it felt great talking to you. I will definitely keep it. Here to Aasna.”, says Aarav.

He gives the phone back to Aasna.

“Amazing lad. Aasna be in touch with him. Let me know when you’ll return home.”, says Gaurav.

“By 4 pm I’ll be home Papa. And yes... I will be in touch with Aarav.”, replied Aasna.

With this their conversation ends. Aasna turned towards Aarav. Aarav gulps, and then smiles at her endearingly.

“Papa wants me and you to be friends. Don’t bother me much, or else I will tell Yash to beat you to death.”, says Aasna. warning Aarav, jokingly.

“And then I will tell uncle about Yash. As simple as it gets.”, says Aarav.

“You won’t.”, says Aasna.

“I can though.”, Aarav replies.

“How, may I know Mr. Verma? Won’t you feel gullible complaining my father, yet accepting my relationship with Yash?.”, asks Aasna, a bit cheekily.

“I see Ms. Sharma, what are you trying to do here. But let’s be honest, I never disregarded your bond with Yash, but when he stepped into my house, I felt that defeat. But now, we are friends. And I will pray every power in this universe to change our fates.”, says Aarav.

Aarav is completely joking here.

“Oh really? I don’t know about the fate, but this happiness of yours is going to turn into agony.”, says Aasna.

“And how would you do that?”, asks Aarav.

“Like this”, says Aasna but stops abruptly.

Aasna proceeds to stomp Aarav's toes subtly . Aarav moans hard, as he didn't expect that physical jab by his lady love. As Aasna walked back to her seat, she had a smile on her face. She is amused. Aarav, though feels the bit of pain on his toes, feels completely mesmerized. This was like the rock bottom of what Aarav could've expected from this relation with Aasna. The moment it felt like Aarav may just stay a step behind because Yash watching over him now, he got a free ticket to friendship with Aasna, through her own father! This is going to change everything. Will Aarav be able to be a great friend to Aasna, and eventually win her heart? Not to forget, Yash will definitely get to know about this. Will he allow Aasna to be friends with Aarav? Things are getting interesting.

“By studying jurisprudence a lawyer can find out the actual rules of law. Jurisprudence provides a guidelines to the judges and the lawyers in ascertaining the true meaning of the laws passed by the legislatures by providing the rules of interpretation.”, says one of the students.

Atul is taking tuitions at home. The students were asked to say something about jurisprudence in the class. One of them answered.

“Okay tell me, who said that- Jurisprudence is the philosophy of positive law?”, asks Atul.

“Gray!”, answered one student.

“Nope, anyone else?”, says Atul

“Sir, it should be Austin.”, answered another student.

“That’s correct! Can anyone tell me his full name? Its important to write full names of the law philosophers.”, says Atul.

“Sir, he is the renowned English philosopher John Austin. He popularized the study of jurisprudence and legal positivism.”, answered Yash.

He searched the answer on the internet sitting at the back bench.

“Good. Alright, that’s all for today. On Friday I will teach you about Administrative Law.”, says Atul, concluding the class for the day.

All the students left the room. Yash though, walked up to Atul.

“Sir, how is your son doing?”, asks Yash.

“Aarav, he is doing well. And yes... I had to ask you this Yash. What was the conversation between him and you last time? It was conflicting, yet fun! Do you both have a beef of some kind?”, asks Atul.

He remembers about that clash between two lovers.

“It was just our way of talking to each other. Not that serious. We will continue it sir, we like it that way.”, Yash replies.

He said it in a way that will make it look like they were friends.

“Hmm, this is a good quality in youngsters today, they are competitive, in literally everything. Sometimes the reasons are bogus. But still it’s good, to go ahead in life.”, says Atul.

He had no idea that the reason was actually bogus, but still it was intense.

“Well I can’t see him today, we always meet in your home.”, says Yash.

“Han, Aarav has gone to visit a friend. I will let him know you were looking for him.”, says Atul.

“Sir, can you just tell me where the home of his friend is? I mean its just a small thing I will meet him in that area and go.”, asks Yash.

Yash’s evil curiousness has always wanted him to keep a check on every move of Aarav.

“Okay, you will meet him in Sector 6, Anjana Residency.”, replies Atul.

Yash was staggered after hearing this. He knew this place very well. He said goodbye to his professor, sat on his scooter and rushed to the place Atul informed him about.

As he reached the location, Yash stormed out of his scooter and entered the building. Security tried to stop him to write the name on the register, but he didn’t wait. He reached the floor, and the moment he stood close to door, he stopped himself.

“Wait, this is the first time I am here, I don’t want to get busted! But he is inside, and I need to see it!”, thinks Yash.

He rings the bell, inconsistently.

“Aree baba wait! *opens the door* Who are... oh.. are you (whispers) Yash?”, says Prerna, who was in the house.

“Yes, I am Yash. And if I am not wrong, you are Prerna, Aasna’s cousin.”, asks Yash.

“No, I am your girl’s bestie! Have you confused Aasna with that guy, my brother Aarav?”, says Prerna.

“Oh my bad. And no, I just thought you both are so close that must be the case, but I see, you are Aarav’s cousin, another good friend of mine.”, says Yash wittily.

“Let him in Preru.”, says Aarav.

Yash became enraged seeing Aarav here! He sprinted towards him and was almost going to hold his collar, but he saw someone sitting on sofa, and stopped.

“Aree Yash, are you Aarav's friend too? That's great!”, asks Gaurav.

Yes, Aarav has visited Aasna's house. Gaurav invited both Atul and Aarav, but Atul had his classes. Aarav didn't feel it right to go alone, so he accompanied Prerna.

“Umm, uncle yes, I am his friend too. I was just looking for him, Atul sir told me I will meet him here, so I thought to come and meet him here itself.”, says Yash.

Saying this, the hands which were going towards Aarav's collar, were now patting his shoulders.

“Gaurav uncle, he is also Aasna's friend if you never knew.”, says Aarav.

He said it to humiliate Yash. Yash staggers a bit, and looks around hesitatingly.

“I know that for a long time now Aarav. So all of you are friends. Have a seat Yash. So yes, Aarav I was asking you why did Atul leave his good lawyer's job, to become a professor. No offense, just curious.”, asks Gaurav.

“Nothing much, he says as a young man he was very enthusiastic about it. But after one case, which he lost, his passion for practising in this profession faded away. So when I was five, he left the job eventually.”, says Aarav.

Gaurav face turns pale hearing about the case Atul lost, as if he knows about it. Prerna noticed that concern in his face.

“What happened uncle? Do you know anything about it.?” , asks Prerna.

“No... not at all. Just feeling a bit petty about my friend, whatever that loss must have done to his will, it must be unfortunate.”, says Gaurav.

“No worries uncle. Now he aims just to make sure, his aspiring students (pats Yash's shoulder) be better lawyers.”, says Aarav.

“Oh wait Yash, are you Atul's student? I see why you both are friends. That's great.”, says Gaurav.

“Yes uncle. It's a privilege to be a friend of Aarav, isn't it? After all, you have acquired so much from your father...” , says Yash, but takes a pause and closes in towards Aarav's ears.

“... even his fate.”, Yash whispers.

Aarav gets infuriated by that comment. But Aarav controls himself, grins wittily, and replies Yash.

“It's an honour to be friends with you too. I hope you achieve the success my father not just in this field, but in life too.”, says Aarav.

Yash goes back to his place, approving the facetious reply, and smiles induced by the reply.

Perna could see the tension building already. Aarav and Yash just cannot stand each other. Gaurav just saw both of them, with curious eyes. Aarav and Yash looked at each other for few seconds. Both are grinning ear to ear, one with anger, one with sheer confidence.

Aasna came out of the kitchen, who was making some tea. She suddenly kept the tray with cups on the table so hard, that everyone sitting in drawing room saw towards her. Her hands were shivering, after seeing both Aarav and Yash together. Both the boys stood up together, as if some mishap happened. They again looked at each other. Both showed signs of concern. Who would have thought, that Aarav, Yash and Aasna, all three of them would be standing under the same roof!

“Aasna, are you okay?”, asks a concerned Gaurav.

“Han Papa! The tray just became hot.”, says Aasna.

“Aasna, wait. (walks up to Aasna) Let me help you with this.”, says Perna.

She takes the tray and keeps it on the table near Aarav, Yash and Gaurav.

“Okay. Gaurav uncle here is your cup, and you two, drink the tea. I am going with Aasna in her room.”, says Perna.

She knows Aasna is in absolute shock right now, not seriously, but still she is.

"I am sorry, I am having your portion of the tea... you can have it. I am fine.", says Yash.

He tries to be good around girls. But one terrifying stare from Aarav's sister just made this chap take the cup and drink the tea, quietly. Perna wasn't the girl to do your nasty job. Aarav saw it and chuckled a bit.

"Well that's good, the men can have our discussion, you two will have your girl time! Haha, just joking. thanks for the tea beta.", says Gaurav.

"Wow! This tea... is good, like really good.", says Aarav, after taking a sip.

"I am the biggest fan of Aasna's tea!", says Gaurav.

"That comes from you! You master the art of delicacies.", says Yash, trying to impress Gaurav.

"I would stand by my words, Aasna is good at this. (Looks at Gaurav) Though I agree that this talent must have come from you.", says Aarav.

If a person is honest, he doesn't need to appreciate anyone, as they say!

"True, (whispers to Aarav) I know it well doofus, I was lucky to taste Aasna's tiffin in school, she cooks well too!", says Yash.

That had a slight impact on Aarav's heart, but he stays unaffected.

"Hmm. So just drink the tea quietly, stop making it obvious. Once he gets to know about you and Aasna, no guarantee if you will leave this home today or not.", says Aarav.

He stuffed some sense into Yash's over confident mind. Before Aasna lost her mind, she goes into her room with Perna.

"Why are the both of them here together!?", Aasna asks Perna. She is still in shock.

"I don't have any idea Aasna. I just came here with Aarav, Yash kahan se tapak gaya I don't know.", says Perna.

She was also too anxious while sitting with Aarav and Yash.

"How did Yash know Aarav has come here!?", asks Aasna.

“Atul Kaka must have said, his law professor.”, says Perna.

“Aarav's father is Yash's lecturer. What in the world is happening!”, says Aasna, completely shook to realize such coincidences.

“What makes you so worried though yaar?”, says Perna, trying to calm her friend down.

“Perna, the thing is, I don't want Aarav and Yash to clash. Now, when our fathers want me and Aarav become friends, I am trying my best to be one. With that, I am still making sure, Yash doesn't feel I am leaving him. He can't live a day without me. He loves me more than I love myself. But Aarav, he isn't doing anything I understand, but Yash is just...”, says Aasna incessantly. She couldn't even complete her words.

“Insecure. His greatest fear is that he'll lose you to someone who loves you unconditionally, that too... without you! Aarav can't do a thing without thinking about you. I have told him plenty of times, it won't work. Yash loves you, that's good. But Aarav, he loves you like a warrior.”, says Perna.

Every word of her sent a shiver down Aasna's spine. Perna encourages Aasna to not to panic about it.

“Nonetheless, don't get conflicted. Be an honest friend to Aarav, that's enough for him. He never asks for anything in return. If you give this friendship to him, sky would be the limit for him.”, says Perna, defending her brother in a way a sister would.

“Yash had to do a lot to win my heart. He knew I liked him initially, but he knew it genuinely and did the best to fulfill our relationship,” says Aasna.

“He has a strong heart, but a fickle mind. Aarav's love is strong, but sadly, his heart isn't strong enough.”, Perna counters.

“That's not true, both of them are really good to me, its just that I never gave Aarav a chance, because I wanted him to move on and stop hurting his heart any further. Perna, please help me with this.”, says Aasna.

“Never leave Yash, be true to your love. Aarav will be proud of you.”, says Perna, the strongest thing she could have ever uttered.

Aasna hugs Perna, but she knows, the solution hasn't been found yet. Maybe she has to be a part of this saga. Maybe she has to see Aarav and Yash strive for her. Aasna can't get away from this! Both come out of the room. By now, the men have finished drinking the tea. Aasna sits near Gaurav, Perna deliberately sits near Yash, to sandwich him between her and Aarav and humiliate him.

"Amazing. So Aasna is friends with Perna since play school, with Yash since elementary school, and with Aarav since college. Not exactly but yes.", says Gaurav, realizing Aarav and Aasna have met before.

"Not exactly, what does that mean?", asks a curious Yash.

"Perna, Aasna and myself, once went to a picnic to the hills near the city with our parents. It was 15 years ago... we were quite young.", revealed Aarav, shocking the world out of Yash.

"I can't forget how much fun we had that day. Me, Atul, and Varun were still some notorious men back then. Aree, speaking of your dad, Perna how is he doing? He last met me at Kanha ji's grocery store two weeks ago.", says Gaurav.

"Papa is out for a business tour to Austria. He will return in two days.", says Perna, whose father worked as Vice President of a medical company.

Aasna was into some deep thought.

"Was that boy Aarav? I didn't knew his name back then, I just played with him because he was with me and Perna. All this time I was ignoring a boy, who gave me one of the best memories of my childhood. I wanted to meet this boy again, once in my life. And I had him in front of my eyes for last three years. How many surprises will God give me now?", Aasna thought to herself.

"Aasna! What has happened to you today, you are acting weird . Is everything okay?", Gaurav asks his daughter.

"Han Papa, everything is fine. Was just thinking about a stuff.", replies Aasna.

"I heard there's a small fair in the city today and it's going close in two days. We still have time, why not let's all of us, go there right now. It's not that far away.", proposed Yash.

After being briefed about the childhood trip by Aarav and Perna, he was feeling frustrated, and immediately wanted to do something about this. Wow.

“That sounds good to me. But I have some work, you all can go. It’s 3:30 pm right now. The fair will close by 10 pm, you all should have a great time!”, says Gaurav.

“Umm... I don’t want to..”, murmured Aasna, as she was in a cluster of thoughts.

“It looks like you are worried about something. Well if we just go out, you will feel better. So let’s go.”, says Aarav.

He wouldn’t miss this opportunity!

“Chal na Aasna, we haven’t gone out together for days.”, says Perna.

“If you all are insisting, then I will join in.”, says Aasna.

All four youngsters made their move. Aasna will sit on Yash's scooter, obviously. Both sat on to move, as Yash started the engine, strong sound is what he heard, the sound a bullet makes. For a moment the couple thought the scooter turned into a bullet bike, but it wasn’t. It was Aarav's Royal Enfield, on which he accompanied his sister Perna. Aasna was awestruck by Aarav's choices. Aarav pulled out his goggles and wore it, and looked towards Yash, who was obviously, biting his teeth. Perna was grinning proudly. And together all four of them took off for the fair.

The cold war continues. But now Aasna has realized, she is too a part this. Right now, she is bent towards Yash's pragmatic approach and his sense of protecting his love. But will Perna be able to help Aarav, whose sense of love, is simply unconditional, emotional, and pure as his vision, to make Aasna acknowledge his love, no matter what it takes!

“Wow! This fair is small but looks huge! We might have a lot of fun, let’s go Aasna!”, says Prerna, as she held Aasna’s hand and runs into the gates.

“Preru! Kya yaar. Why would she leave me here with him?”, thought Aarav, as he wasn’t a fan of this moment.

“Let’s get in Singhania.”, says Yash.

He taunts Aarav, because he rode a bullet in front of his scooter.

“Come on yaar, Vespa isn’t a cheap scooter. Stop thinking that I am a rich prick. You are stylish too.”, says Aarav.

He meant Yash’s choices were cool, not his looks.

“Well, it’s not mine, borrowed it from a cousin.”, says Yash.

“Wow, Aasna knows it?”, Aarav asks notoriously.

“Definitely not!”, replies Yash.

“Okay Mr. Dhoni. Let’s be with Aasna and that creature. Or else we’ll lose their track.”, says Aarav.

Prerna and Aasna first stopped at a jewellery shop. Obviously.

“Bhaiya thik se bolo. 250 is too much.”, Prerna revolts.

“Aree are we really going to buy from here?”, asks Aasna, who is still a bit diverted in here thoughts.

“Why not, fairs don’t stay for long. We must buy!”, replies Prerna.

“There they are, hello ladies. Let’s see what are you guys doing?”, says Yash.

Yash has no issue in getting along with girls in their activities. He was pretty outgoing, outward in nature. Whereas Aarav, took time to get along in the mix of madness of youth.

“Obviously, the first thing any lady will do in an outing is go to jewellery or dress shop. Are you new to this?”, says Aarav.

“A woman comes to a dress or jewellery shop first because she is taught to value herself first above everyone. Men are either leaned to impress others for no reason (to Yash) or fulfil their dreams by any means because they think haven’t achieved it yet (to Aarav). There’s nothing wrong in it. Men must have these qualities. Women though, are gifted with self love and self satisfaction since birth. That’s why we keep enhancing ourselves, this nature is a part of it.”, says Aasna.

This comes out as her reply, out of nowhere. Her lovers look at her with utter shock. Perna is busy with the shopkeeper, but heard her friend well.

“That was a rock bottom on their head. Great Aasna. (Turns to shopkeeper) I will take this pair for 160.”, says Perna.

“Guys, how does this one look?”, says Aasna, as she shows a necklace to her friends.

“You will make the necklace look more beautiful than it is, so it’s pretty good.”, says Yash.

He didn’t learn a thing from Aasna's words moments ago.

“Okay... (smiles) but I like this one more.”, says Aasna, showing another necklace to him.

“This one is much simpler in design, would suit you.”, says Perna.

“The first one is much more worked on, it would look good on you.”, says Yash a bit assertively.

“Girls know this game better lad.”, replies Perna.

“I know what she likes more than you. I know you are a childhood friend but we have much deeper relation.”, says Yash.

“I like both. Which one should I choose?”, says Aasna, confused.

“Why not buy both of them?”, says Aarav.

All eyes looked at him. Perna quickly looked down and grins, she knew this was coming. Yash was perplexed. Aasna, was kinda happy with that answer, but she knows that is not the first option.

“You think money comes out of trees?”, Yash whispers to Aarav.

“No it comes out of our wallet.”, says Aarav. A chad reply.

“I just need one, if I would like to.”, says Aasna.

“*Enhance your inner self* by gifting yourself both the necklaces Aasna.”, Aarav suggests exactly according to Aasna's word of wisdom. Yash was surprised, but acceptance too. Perna was proud inside. Aasna was impressed.

“Alright, let's buy both of them, I will take this pair of earring, looks cute. Isn't it Aarav? (Aarav nods) Bhaiya what's the total now. Say it correctly, or else we won't pay but take our things.”, says Perna to the shopkeeper.

She wouldn't spare an extra penny.

“Sab milaake 400. I can't take any less than this. I will be at heavy loss.”, says the shopkeeper.

“Heavy? You earn thousands here every day, we get those thousands occasionally as pocket money or blessings.”, says Perna.

“The earring is 160, both the necklace is 120 each, 240. Total 400 rupees.”, says the shopkeeper.

“Let me pay for you Aasna. Here are 240 rupees bhaiya.”, says Yash, as he pays for the necklace.

“Aarav, come and pay for me.”, pleads Perna.

“Why? You bargained it to 160, now why would I pay?”, says Aarav.

Mandatory sibling banter begins.

“Rakhi gift. Pleeaaassee!”, Perna insists.

“Rakhi, seriously. We give Cadbury Celebrations for that occasion... anyways. Bhaiya show me the QR code.”, says Aarav, as he pays for the earring.

“Aap log bhi kuch lijiye.”, says the shopkeeper to boys because things for them was also available.

Aarav and Yash look at the pieces as if trying to find water in desert. Aarav finds something nice, and thinks to buy it.

“I like this bracelet. “A” letter embraced on it. Please show me one out of this pair.”, says Aarav, as he saw a packed pair of bracelet.

“You have to buy both of them for 60 rupees.”, shopkeeper replies.

“Why? I only need one. I will wear just one bracelet.”, says Aarav.

“It’s a couple edition, for the couples whose name start with ‘A’.”, says the shopkeeper.

Aarav was awestruck. Aasna knew why Aarav suddenly had the reaction, chuckles on her own. Yash hilariously turned towards Aarav with a frown. Aarav kept the packet down and joined his hands even more hilariously, asking Yash for apologies. Prerna laughed her arse off. Four of them left the jewellery shop after the good moment.

As they walked in the hush & rush of the fair, Yash and Aasna walked holding each other’s hands, talking to each other, Aasna sometimes grabbing Yash’s arm, laughing, having a nice time. Aarav walked beside them, with his hands in pocket, looking at them with a smile on his face. Prerna could see the pain behind the smile. But she knew his brother was good at compromising. She held his arm and put her head on his shoulder. Aarav laughed a bit because he knew why Prerna did it.

“Does it hurt you?”, asks Prerna.

“Look at Aasna, she looks happy. How can I be hurt seeing her happy?”, answers Aarav.

“Aah! Please become my boyfriend. We are cousins but that’s fine.”, Prerna jokes.

“Dimaag mat kha mera ab. (Laughs) Silly girl.”, replies Aarav.

“I am hungry yaar. Oye you couple, (to Yash and Aasna) let’s go to the food court.”, insists Prerna.

“I know a great place to have some good food in this fair. Let me take you all there.”, says Yash.

“Have you come to this fair before?”, asks Aarav.

“Yes I have.”, answers Yash.

Aasna stops walking. Turns towards Yash. “With whom?”, asks Aasna.

“Wow... don’t doubt me lol. I came here with my mother two days ago.”, replies Yash. Aasna nodded and started walking again. Aarav and Prerna had a good laugh.

They reach the food point after walking through the crowd for almost ten minutes.

“OMG! Is it the famous Taj food court?”, says Perna, as she becomes excited.

“Yup, let me go to the counter, I will bring some great stuff.”, says Yash.

He starts walking towards the counter after the co. chose a place to sit.

“No wait! I will choose what I will have.”, yells Perna, as she goes behind Yash.

Aarav and Aasna are sitting on the table now. Both looked at each other and realized this is THE moment. Aarav and Aasna, never in their dreams thought they will go out on trip to a fair like this. Right now, when they are sitting at table, they are thinking a lot of things. Aarav and Aasna still aren't close enough to talk to each other quiet fluently, but now they do have a mutual rapport. After knowing Aarav was that little boy she was in search of, and seeing Aarav's straight forward and fun nature, Aasna definitely has grown some trust in him. Whereas Aarav, he is sitting with his world right now. No explanation needed. Yash who was trying to put his hands on Aarav, now puts his faith on him. He has no choice because Aasna's father Gaurav believes Aarav a lot. Perna's undue support and care for Aarav continues. Are things cooling down, or something is going to alter this smooth course of events?

“Uhm... Aasna, this might be the right moment. I want to say.. I am sorry.”, says Aarav.

“Sorry! For what?”, asks Aasna, as it came out of nowhere from Aarav.

“For all those times I made you feel uncomfortable in college, just for seeing you. I never meant to hurt you.”, says Aarav, as he looked pretty serious.

“It’s fine. It doesn’t matter now.”, says Aasna.

Aasna believes so because it really doesn’t. Both Aasna and Aarav have a relation now.

“No it does! I always wanted to make sure are you doing good. I also wanted to appreciate you for being merciful to me. I know I unintentionally annoyed you a lot, but you didn’t say anything. That day when you said the reason, I cannot explain it in words how I felt. I always wanted to tell you that I don’t need anything in return, I don’t intent to do anything that would hurt you. I respect you more than I love... than I have feelings for you. It felt like, a burden of three long years was just taken off my heart. Thank you so much Aasna.”, says Aarav, a bit emotionally.

Aasna had a broad smile on her tender face, and replies to Aarav’s innocence.

“Aarav, please. Don’t do this to yourself. You are at no fault. I know I wanted to get rid of that atmosphere, I am sorry, but I never thought it was something too wrong on your side to do it. You don’t need to ask for any apology. Every lover does it. Some are ready to express their feelings, like I did, some can’t. I don’t know why there is such distinction, but it is. I am happy that you said it. Now never think about it, just be in this moment. I am with you, everyone is here, let’s just have a good time. Never be sorry for your feelings. It’s my fault I never let you know how I felt about this. Now that I know, I promise to respect it. Just never be sorry”, says Aasna humbly.

These words moved Aarav. He feels much better now. *Never be sorry for you feelings...* Aasna can’t realize what she has just said. She has revived

a lot of confidence in Aarav. He just may not fear now to express his long pressed feelings for Aasna. But, obviously, he has to control himself.

“Alright, I will won’t sorry. So if you ever get annoyed again, just remember that I love you.”, says Aarav.

Dang! Aarav just said those three words, he really never feared loving Aasna. It was just that he was scared how Aasna feels about it. There was a point where he felt Aasna felt the very way he was afraid she will about him. The Aasna who used to see Aarav as a stalker two years ago, is now encouraging him to never disrespect his feelings. And that’s why, Aarav is relieved, and turns the mood humorous now. Aasna was definitely caught off guard by that.

“I will thrash your face with this menu! Don’t be so comfortable now.”, Aasna quickly revolted humorously.

“Haha.. didn’t you just said not to be sorry for your feelings?”, says Aarav.

“I didn’t mean be notorious about it too! Let Yash come, he will give you some dose. By the way, what’s taking so long for the food to come?”, says Aasna.

“The real life Anupama is with him, that’s why it is taking the time.”, Aarav.

“Really? Anupama... my god!”, says Aasna, amused by Aarav’s sense of humour.

“Prerna can’t get a better reference than this. Matter of fact, what can I reference you with?”, says Aarav.

“No don’t please.. Aaa!”, Aasna pleads.

“Yep! You are a babe!”, says Aarav.

He is playing around well with her lady love.

Kya bola tumne?”, says Aasna, as her hands are slowly moving towards her feet, for the heels.

“Patiala Babes! Yes Mini, calm down!”, says Aarav.

“Oh my god. Mini... nice. That was my favourite show! “, says Aasna.

“Oh wow! Is it a coincidence?”, asks Aarav.

“Coincidence what?”, Aasna asks back.

“I knew your favourite song, I know your favourite show, how? “, says Aarav.

“I bet you don’t know what my favourite food is.”, says Aasna.

Here’s the first challenge for the lover boy.

“I think I also know that answer. I will give it in some time.”, says Aarav, accepting the challenge.

Yash and Perna arrive with the food.

“Sorry, we kept you both waiting for that long. It’s crowded as you can see.”, says Yash, as he sits beside Aasna.

“It’s his fault. God knows what diamond he told the guys to cook for Aasna. It’s not even in the menu!”, says Perna, blaming Yash for the delay.

“It is in the menu, it’s just that this is the way Aasna likes it.”, replies Yash.

“So Aasna, your favourite food is, what Yash has, or would have brought for you. This special Raj Kachori.”, Aarav whispers.

The answer to Aasna's challenge, in the smartest way. Aasna was dumbfounded.. she smiled with the sense of defeat.

“Nothing can beat Maggi, and with cheese on it... yummy!”, says Perna.

“Hmm, pretty boring but will work.”, says Aarav, critiquing his cousin’s choice.

“What on earth? Did you just say Maggi boring? Do you wanna die?”, Perna exclaims.

“For me, three samosas and some chutney, uff! Heaven!”, says Aarav, the brand ambassador for Indian snacks.

“Eat or I will take the bowl away.”, warns Perna.

“Okay mother Maggi.”, says Aarav, taunting Perna with a hilarious.

Aasna almost spit her food in laughter. Yash held her tight and laughed. Perna stomped Aarav's leg beneath.

“Ouch! Why do you girls have a problem with my toes! First Aasna, and now Prerna.”, says Aarav spontaneously.

Yash has a strained look on his face.

“Aasna?”, asks Yash.

“Yes.... uhm... yah.”, says Aarav, groaning in pain.

But after saying it, he realized he just might be in trouble.

“Wow, never knew about this.”, says Yash.

He was fuming inside, but smiled and had his meal.

“It was like... I was walking in the corridor, I had to get into a class and Aarav just came out of the class the moment I stepped in, I stomped his toes by mistake. It was an accident.”, says Aasna,

She lies as she knew Yash wasn't feeling this right.

“Oh okay. Be careful next time, Aarav.”, says Yash, looking down at his meal.

“Yes sir.”, says Aarav after taking a bite of his samosa.

After the food, the group decided to go for some fun to end their trip.

“Aasna, let's go to the Giant Wheel.”, says Prerna.

She was glaring at the beautifully lighted huge wheel, saying as if she saw a shooting star.

“We just had our meal, what if this turns a bit rough for the tummy.”, says Aasna, as she hated the feeling of nausea.

“Nothing will happen. Let's go!”, says Prerna, grabbing Aasna's hand, ready to go.

“Me and Aarav will go for the balloon shooting. You guys have your time here.”, says Yash.

“Fine, lets go.”, says Aarav.

He agreed and walked out with Yash. They reach the shooting zone, very near to the ride. Both grab their guns and start aiming.

“Aarav, let me explain the rules, the one who shoots that little teddy bear off the ropes, gets the win. To tie, the loser will get one more shot, and he has to shoot any one of the other things hanging. If done, then

the game is draw, if not, one wins, one loses.”, says Yash, making his own game, own rules.

Competition is his way to interact. Aarav acknowledges it.

“Alright captain. Let’s shoot.”, says Aarav, trying to maintain the hilarity in the conversation.

“Interesting, after all, you addressed me as the Thala himself.”, says Yash.

He took the pride in the fact that Aarav was keeping him high.

Aarav didn’t say anything and went for the first shot. Yash was surprised.

“Damn that was sudden. But it missed, my turn.”, Yash shoots, missed.

As the shopkeeper reloads, Yash speaks.

“Now tell me, why did Aasna stomp your toes?” , asks Yash.

Aarav knew Yash brought him here away from the girls for this.

“Well yes, Aasna didn’t say the truth. (Shoots, misses). We were in the same room for our class. She got a call from Gaurav uncle.”, says Aarav, who stops after saying this to see Yash's shot.

(Yash shoots, misses) “So what does it have to do with what I am asking?”, Yash asks calmly.

“He talked to her for some time. Before that, Gaurav uncle talked to Papa, your professor and his long time old friend. So while talking to Aasna, (shoots, misses) Uncle talked about me with Aasna.”, Aarav explains thoroughly.

“Okay... This is a situation I didn’t want to come across. (Shoots, misses) Yup, I was right. I didn’t want to. Continue.”, says Yash.

He couldn’t understand how Aasna’s father and Aarav's father are friends. He is just not comfortable with the fact.

“Aasna went on to say that I was right there. Then what, uncle asked her to let him talk to me. Aasna gave her phone to me, Gaurav uncle and I had a short but refreshing conversation. (Shoots, barely misses) Uff! He requested me to be a friend of Aasna, and told her the same. After the call, we had a fun conversation, and that’s when she stomped me.”, says Aarav.

“What was the conversation about?”, asks Yash.

“That’s... none of your business.”, Aarav replies.

Dang, bitter reply was that from Aarav, must have struck a nerve in Yash.

“Haha... I shouldn’t be knowing secrets between friends. Fine, but remember, Aasna is your friend now, but if you get further close to her, I will, in some way, may not be physical, but (shoots, gets the target)..... will harm you.”, says Yash.

He got the win, in both the games, the shooting and also the mind games., as he grins proudly.

Aarav too, replies with a smile. As per the rule, he had one shot left, even though Yash won. So he aims at the farthest toy, shoots, and alas! This shot just dropped the whole string the toys were hanging on to! The shopkeeper was stunned and warns Aarav to be careful. Yash knew it, Aarav hit it deliberately, giving him a quite message.

What Yash thought was a smile of defeat, turned into a smile of confidence on Aarav's face. Nonetheless, Yash won the game, because this won’t be considered as draw. He gets the stuffed bear, which now his victorious heart will gift it to Aasna. Aarav, the defeated soul but not discouraged, paid for the game.

Perna and Aasna come towards the boys after the ride.

“God that ride was a bit dangerous, but a lot of fun.”, says Aasna.

“Are you okay?”, asks Yash.

“Yes I am completely fine.”, replied Aasna.

“Aarav, pakad mereko!”, says Perna, as she dropped on Aarav.

Her head was reeling after the ride. Not really.

“Stand still! Drama queen. I told you last time we visited a fair that these giant wheel aren’t fun. You should have come here, me and Yash had a great time shooting the balloons.”, says Aarav.

“Bhai sahab! He shot the nail on which all the toys were hanging. Shopkeeper was shocked to death. Well I got something for you, this teddy, I just got it after successfully getting the hit.”, says Yash, and gifts his girl yet another stuff.

“Wow this is so cute! Thank you.”, says Aasna.

“You shot down the whole string, doesn’t that mean that whole bunch of toys belong to me? Hahahaa...”, says Prerna.

“Listen Preru, Yash gave that teddy to Aasna because he wanted to. If I would have won any of those toys, I wouldn’t have given it to you.”, says Aarav.

“Why!?” , Prerna revolts.

“Didn’t I give you the rakhi gift. They are also cute. Stay happy with it.”, says Aarav.

“Such a bad brother, that’s why you can’t make a girlfriend. Oh.” says Prerna.

After saying it, she realized she made a blunder.

Aarav who was walking ahead stopped. Aasna closed her eyes, regretting the moment. Yash, even he felt it was wrong timing.

“Let’s go home guys. That’s enough fun for the day. It’s 7:30 pm. Uncle said Aasna should be home by 8 pm. Let’s go.”, says Aarav.

Without looking behind, he walks towards the gate. Other three walked behind him.

This was a fun fair for sure. But all this time, looks like Aarav was tested by his peers. Aasna gave him believe, Prerna gives the care, but lacks the understanding of how deep his feelings are. Yash is fully ready to block Aarav's path to win Aasna's heart. The cold war between these two lovers just got seriously colder after that encounter, just when it was looking like they were getting along. Is this going to affect the newly born fun relation of Aarav and Aasna?

“It’s all your fault.”, says Yash.

“I know. I am such a fool.” Prerna regrets.

“Are you messing with her, or taunting Aarav?”, asks Aasna, as she is familiar with Yash's nature.

“I am genuinely letting her know she was fool enough to say that.”, says Yash, and he was really serious.

“You think its my fault, right? Fine, now bear this.”, says Prerna.

Saying this, she goes and sits on Yash's Vespa scooty.

“Bro get down!”, says Yash, casually ordering Prerna.

“Listen, we all will now ride to Aasna's home, it doesn’t matter what scooter we are riding on.” says Prerna.

She finds the most outrageous, unimaginable way to rectify her mistake.

“Prerna you know he can’t do that, or if I put it in better words, he won’t allow that to happen.”, Aasna tells her slowly.

“What’s the issue here? Is it me riding with Yash, or you riding with Aarav? I know it’s the latter. You both have to put some faith on my brother. Please I request you both to do it.”, says Prerna.

What looked like a notorious prank of her, it was not that but a way Prerna of making the couple realize they can trust him, specifically Aasna.

Aarav arrives with his bike. He staggers after seeing Prerna sitting on Yash's scooty.

“Oh hello, why are you sitting there? Come and sit here, fast.”, says Aarav in a commanding tone.

“I am sorry Aru for what I said.”, says Prerna.

“You would be the last person I would like to hold a grudge with. Now come and sit.”, Aarav replies humbly.

Perna grabs Yash's arm and makes him sit on the scooty. Yash understood this girl is a menace and she won't listen to a single word. Aasna told Yash to just do what Perna tells him to do. Yash leaves with Perna. Aarav looks up and he sees them go.

"Oyee! Perna what—oh. Okay. No way they left you here to go with me", whispers Aarav.

He has finally realized he is in an awkward situation now.

"Well, they are gone. They are perhaps, heading to my home.", says Aasna.

Both can't believe this moment is even happening.

"Why did Perna go with him?", asks Aarav.

"She does what she wants.", Aasna answers.

"Yeah. Alright... please have your seat.", says Aarav.

He couldn't believe he is asking this to his love, to go on a ride with him. His favourite tune has already started beating his eardrums in his mind. His heart is pumping faster than the fuel in his bike. On lord... Aarav is very happy!

Aasna blushes and sits behind Aarav subtly. The moment Aasna kept her hands on his shoulders, Aarav felt the most beautiful jolt on his body ever. He just closed his eyes, smiled and let it in.

"Shall we go?", asks Aarav.

"Yes I am good.", Aasna replies.

And with that, the first ride of the lover and the loved one begins. This was beautiful moment to witness. The clouds on the sky move away, because the moon itself wants to see this amazing event. Both didn't speak a word. But somewhere inside, not only Aarav, even Aasna felt nice about this. She could slowly realize the essence that Aarav wanted to spread through his love. He doesn't need to say it out or try to receive the same from her. He just has to show it, and Aarav didn't fear to show his love. Aasna was impressed by this gesture. Even then, all they can be is good friends.

Everyone reaches Aasna's home. As Aasna rings the bell, her mother, Garima opens it.

“12 minutes to eight o’clock, that’s sharp. Papa said to come back by eight. I think you had a good company (sees Prerna), wait a minute... how did this girl become so punctual? (everyone laughs).”, says Garima. She is usually nice in nature.

“Aunty, please.”, Prerna cries, not really.

“Mama, we will have to separate the stuffs we bought from the fair. So can they go in?”, says Aasna.

Her mother’s nature was bit conventional, unlike her free-willed father.

“Sure, let me first see these two boys. How are you Yash?”, says Garima.

“Hello aunty, I am doing good, how about you?”, says Yash.

“Good. Aasna told you were a law student. I don’t have good relation with lawyers. Be careful!”, says Garima cheekily.

First sentence was true, but Garima turns it into a joke. Yash relishes the jab. Aarav first touched her feet and then speaks as he gets up.

“Namaste Aunty. Its been a long time.”, says Aarav.

He knows his ethics. Yash regretted instantly. But Garima for some reason, was not that impressed.

“Sure, its been ages we have met you and your father.”, says Garima gravely.

“Yes aunty. Our fathers are good friends, good that the bond is still very much alive.”, says Aarav.

“Hmm, alright get inside kids.”, says Garima.

Aasna and co. goes towards her room instantly.

“Why, why did he come back in our lives. He was the one who failed us when needed the most.”, says Garima to Gaurav.

“You have to let go what happened in the past. You are still against the decision. Why don’t you ask those people who lost lakhs of money because of your brother.”, says Gaurav.

“He wasn’t alone. The people who had real hand in it are still roaming freely.’, Garima revolted.

“When a war is lost, the king is the one who gets defeated first, then his army. But leave it now Garima. He is living a better life now.”, says Gaurav.

“You said that Yash, is Atul’s student right. The man who mentors these two boys, is the reason behind the most embarrassing seven years my family ever went through. I won’t let Aasna be their—”, says an enraged Garima.

“Garima! Just stop! These are kids who don’t even know what happened. Literally twenty years have passed now. Please forget about it. Don’t ever come in between Aasna and her friends.”, Gaurav pleads to his wife.

“I am her mother Gaurav, I won’t—”, says Garima, but this time her daughter interrupts.

“Mama, Papa, they are leaving.”, says Aasna.

Gaurav and Garima, bit staggered, turn towards Aasna, who came out of her room with other kids.

“Oh good. I think you all had a great time today. You all can come home whenever you all want. Just assume this as your own house. Perna you are like our own daughter already. It’s for both of you”, says Gaurav.

He wants the youngsters to leave with a good note.

“Definitely uncle.”, replies Yash, of course.

“Sure, next time I will come with Papa.”, says Aarav, wrong timing.

“Aarav, do come with your father next time. He will get the treatment he deserves. The best treatment!”, says Garima.

She meant something completely different.

“Okay children, it’s getting late. You all must leave.”, Gaurav is not pleased.

“Aasna, please meet me in the college. I need some interested students to meet me in the campus for a discussion tomorrow. Would you join in?”, asks Aarav.

He was now confident around her. Yash looked at him, why not.

“Yes I will. I had a great day. Thank you everyone.”, says Aasna.

“Hey Aarav, I forgot to ask you this question, why did you come here, to Aasna's house at first place?”, asks the curious Yash.

“Wah! You could have asked this first rather than trying to put hands on my brother. He came because Gaurav uncle invited him.”, Prerna replies.

“Alright, I can't stop, you both meeting in college now. But do remember my words.”, Yash reminds.

“Aree chill. It's about a college trip. Many students will be there.”, says Aarav. Prerna understood.

She was amazed of how Aarav has planned it all out. Aasna nod her head helplessly, but before they left, she waved them a final goodbye.

The three friends leave. Few minutes later, Aarav returns to his home.

“Hey, did you meet Yash? He sprinted out of the house to meet you.”, asked Atul, who was reading a book on his couch.

“Yes Papa, not only that. Me, him, Aasna and Prerna, we all went to the fair, played a lot of games and bought all these stuff. Yeah we had a good time.”, says Aarav.

“Wow. That's good. How is Gaurav doing?”, asks Atul.

“He is doing good. Even Garima aunty is doing well.”, says Aarav.

Atul paused for awhile, hearing about Garima. But before his son asks anything about it, he replies.

“Good to hear they are doing well. Okay. Go and fresh yourself up now.”, says Atul.

“Yes Papa.”, says Aarav, as he goes to his room.

“No way he met Garima. This is not good.”, says Atul.

Atul talks to himself. He looked scared.

“He shouldn't know about this Atul.”, Atul felt a voice speaking to him. He held his shoulder tight.

“Vedika. I am sorry this is happening.”, says Atul.

It was his wife. He was imagining his demised partner talking to him. He frequently assumes her being around. Right now, Vedika's soul is holding onto his shoulders and talking to him.

What is this situation now? Everything is fine between the children, but what's going on between the parents? Who is Garima's brother? Why was Gaurav talking about people losing money? What makes Garima feel this way about Atul? Atul on the other hand, is scared about something which happened long ago between him and Garima. Why is he so concerned that his wife, Vedika's soul has to come and comfort him? What is it that Aarav, Aasna, even Yash shouldn't know about, according to Gaurav? We will only know it afterwards.

Twenty one years ago... around the year 2001...
Doorbell rings

“Let me open the door.”, says Varun. “Aree Gaurav! Namaste Bhabhi ji! Please get in.”, says Varun.

He welcomes Gaurav and Garima to his home.

“How are you man? (Hugs) It’s been a long time. How’s everything going?”, asks Varun, as he sits down with Gaurav and Garima.

“I am good how about you?”, asks Gaurav.

“You know, life has changed after college and much more after marriage. Happily all my dreams are coming true, but definitely, the effort have been hard.”, Varun answers.

“Great to hear that. Aree bhabhi ji namaste!”, says Gaurav, as Varun's wife, Tanuja enters the living room.

“Namaste Gaurav bhaiya. Namaste Garima. How did you both miss this 2 BHK flat over your spacious bungalow today?”, says Tanuja.

She starts the conversation with a humorous note.

“Tanuja, you wanted a 1 BHK flat, I chose this over that little home, be thankful to this amazing husband of yours.”, says Varun

Why would he stay behind.

“Oh really! Even if that house was 1 BHK, it was more advanced than this one. You know what let’s just stop arguing about this and kindly attend our guests. I will make some tea for both of them.”, says Tanuja.

“Aree Tanuja don't tire yourself. We will just be here for some time and leave.”, says Garima.

“Some time? Why some time? You will be here for good amount of time, after all you both have visited us after a long time.”, Tanuja reacts.

“This is your first visit after our marriage. You have to stay a bit longer!”, Varun adds on. “Tanuja bring us the tea”.

“Huh?”, says Tanuja.

She doesn't want to hear that tone.

“Oh my dear wife, please make all of us, even yourself some tea. Let's drink and talk together.”, says Varun softly.

“That's what I expected. Continue the conversation. I am coming with the tea.”, says Tanuja as she leaves for kitchen.

“Uff! Marriage is a pain. Umm anyways. So, after a long time, it's feels good to see you both.”, says Varun.

“Yes, actually we came for help.”, says Gaurav.

He comes to the reason of visiting Varun.

“Help? Sure, but what kind of help?”, asks Varun.

“Varun bhaiya, we actually need a lawyer. Now you have lived in this city since birth, you must know the best of every person here.”, says Garima.

“Oh okay, what's the case?”, says Gaurav.

“Garima's cousin, Aniket Rana. This name is pretty popular nowadays.”, says Gaurav, just the name.

“He is your brother!? Bhabhi ji, you know what he has done right?”, says Varun, completely shocked.

“Yes, I have to protect him. He is our family.”, says Garima.

“7.5 crore rupees. It's not a small amount.”, Varun tells, seriously.

“The figures being told by the media are wrong. And not everything is against Aniket, he was just a mediator. The real culprits are hiding somewhere.”, Garima says forcefully.

“I don't know Bhabhi ji. I just feel, playing with the hopes of 100s of people, taking their hard earned money was wrong.”, says Varun with honesty.

“This is pretty risky Garima. What if your brother is found guilty? How tough will it be for your family?”, says Tanuja, as she brings the tea to the table.

“Garima has to listen to her family. And somewhere she agrees with them too. Please Varun, suggest us a good lawyer who will fight the case on our behalf.”, Gaurav requests.

“There’s my brother Atul, he is a lawyer. He is doing good in his cases recently.”, says Varun.

He is Atul’s elder cousin.

“You mean our Atul, Atul Verma. I met him during college days. He used to come and drink at our tea stall. He has become a lawyer. Wow yaar.”, says Gaurav, as he hears about his friend after a long time.

“Is he experienced? I am not underestimating your friend, just curious and worried.”, asks Garima.

“If Ganesh ji blesses your family, then everything will be fine.”, prays Tanuja.

“Gaurav, just talk to him, if he accepts, then I hope everything goes well.”, Varun adds to it.

“Many big lawyers rejected our case. We put good offers for them. But looks like they are just afraid.”, says Gaurav, very tensely.

“They are just believing in what the news is circulating around them.”, Garima revolts.

Gaurav holds her hands. She takes the cup and takes a sip of tea. She is very tensed.

“Calm down Garima Bhabhi, I believe in Atul Bhaiya... he may definitely find a way out of this.”, says Tanuja, .

“Thank you Varun, I knew you would have helped me and my wife.”, says Gaurav, a bit relieved.

“Arey aaj nahi toh kab kaam aaunga. You are like a brother for me.”, says Varun.

“Thank you so much. Can we meet Mr. Verma now?”, asks Garima eagerly.

“He must be in his chamber.”, Varun answers, isn’t sure though.

“I will ask Vedika bhabhi. Let me call her.”, says Tanuja.

She gets up to bring her phone.

“Atul is married? That’s good to hear.”, says Gaurav.

“Yes, it’s just few months to his marriage. Vedika bhabhi (whispers) is two times dangerous than Tanuja. Atul doing good nowadays in his cases, the reason is that woman who has maintained his discipline.”, says Varun.

He gives a brief introduction of his sister in law.

“Don’t scare me. I am already tensed. You haven’t changed a bit.”, says Gaurav.

The environment was pretty cool until Garima gave a look that brought the men back to being serious.

“Vedika Bhabhi just said Atul Bhaiya is free right now. You can go and meet him in his chamber.”, says Tanuja, as confirms it after talking to Vedika on phone.

“Alright. Gaurav we will meet him right after we leave from here. We can’t delay anymore.”, says Garima eagerly.

“Fine, let’s just finish the tea first.”, Gaurav says, as they start drinking the tea and talk about other things.

“Thank you so much for the help and hospitality Varun bhaiya and Tanuja. We forever owe to you both.”, says Garima gratefully.

“Anytime bhabhi ji. Gaurav, if you need anything else, just let me know.”, Varun says.

“Thanks Varun.”, Gaurav thanks.

“Please come again, we would love to meet you both as a family.”, says Tanuja, as she walks up to close the door.

Door closes

Tanuja suddenly looks towards the door as she was sitting and deeply thinking about this day. Perna came into her room.

“Mama, did I disturb you?”, asks Perna.

“No! Not at all. Where were you by the way?”, asks Tanuja, as she didn’t see her daughter since afternoon.

"I was with Aarav, I actually went to Aasna's home with him. Gaurav uncle invited him. He wanted Atul Kaku to join Aarav, but he couldn't come. So he went with me. Then after some time me, Aarav, Aasna and another friend of her, Yash, we all went to this fair, from where I brought you this. See.", says Prerna.

She explains her whole day with her friends and cousin. She takes out a dress she brought for her mother.

"Arey Prerna, I did wanted a dress of this material. Thank you! But wait, did you go to Aasna's home, with Aarav. Did he meet Aasna's parents? Her mother?", Tanuja asks, pretty concerned.

"Yes obviously. Why?", Prerna asks.

She found it a bit odd of her mother to ask this question.

"Oh nothing. Just asking.", says Tanuja.

Suddenly Prerna's phone starts ringing. It's Aarav.

"Yes Aarav!", Prerna answers the call.

"Hi, just wanted to say I reached home safely. And I hope you had fun. Sorry for dragging you with me to Aasna's house. You know it would have been bit uncomfortable to go alone the first time.", says Aarav.

"I understand Aru. I had a lot of fun!", Prerna answers.

"And yes Preru, don't worry, I am not mad at you for what you said before leaving the fair. I was just shocked.", says Aarav.

"I am still very sorry for that. You are actually going great! Can't wait for tomorrow, are you going to do something in college?", asks Prerna.

"Yup, I will let you know about it. I have to go now. Bye!", says Aarav, as he ends the conversation.

"Bye Aarav. Good night!", Prerna keeps the call.

"Okay Prerna, chal fresh hoja.", says Tanuja.

"Okay Mama.", says Prerna, as she leaves for her room.

"Oh no, Garima met Aarav. Atul not going there is understood. I wish I wouldn't have called Vedika that day. I just hope these kids don't know about what happened back then. Aarav and Aasna, if they are friends, their friendship will shatter. Garima still holds the grudge. Oh

Bappa, please give some wisdom to Garima, and don't make her commit something atrocious.", Tanuja talks to herself.

Tanuja, Perna's mother was remembering the day Gaurav and Garima asked her and Varun, her husband for help. It seems like long ago, way before Aarav, Aasna and Perna were born, Garima's brother, who now we know as Aniket, did some crime related to money or something. Both came to Varun to help them get a lawyer, Atul was his first suggestion. Looks like they agreed to it. All of this is good enough, but what really all the parents, even Tanuja wants to keep their children away from knowing? We have to wait and see.

“Om Tatpurushaya Vidmahe Mahadevaya Dhimahi Tanno Rudrah Prachodayat.”, chanted Atul.

He is seated cross legged with joined hands and eyes closed, in the verandah on his mat. He is a huge devotee of Lord Shiva.

Aarav, ready with his college bag and bike keys, is standing beside Atul, praying on his own, quietly humming to make sure he doesn't disturb his father. But he hums something which is nothing close to a proper chant.

“Beta mantra ka jaap kar raha hai ya rap kar raha hai?”, asks Atul humorously.

“No Papa. I am just in a hurry, that's why I am chanting all the important mantras in one go.”, replies Aarav, giving a subtle laugh to his father.

“What makes you more busier than the Almighty himself?”, Atul asks, now a bit seriously but still with a smile on his face.

“Actually Papa, I have a very important task today, please pray for it goes well.”, Aarav pleads to his father.

“Sure. Just chant – Om Namoh Bhagwate Rudraay. This mantra makes sure that all your wishes come true.”, says Atul, making Aarav chant this Shiv mantra.

“(Joins his hands, closes his eyes) Om Namoh Bhagwate Rudraay. Thank you Papa. I am will be back around 3 pm, bye.”, says Aarav.

He chants the mantra and leaves for college.

“Take care Aarav. Bye.”, says Atul, as he gets back to prayers.

“That was a fun visit to the fair indeed. What an asshole is this Yash! Let me see how he even thinks of eliminating you out of this game!”, says Deepak. He is talking with Aarav in a classroom in their college.

“You are more enraged than me. But this is apt for a lover like him. Yash needs to be this possessive, he has no other choice. His love is

weak, very weak. But as long as Aasna loves her, I am no one to fight.”, says

Aarav.

“This relationship doesn’t make sense! A well cultured and pure girl like Aasna, deserves an absolute package of love like you! Not a roadside romeo like Yash!”, Deepak revolts.

“That’s upon them. That couple only knows how does that relationship makes sense. But I saw in the fair, I don’t know if it makes sense or not, but it’s..... nice. They get along well with each other. They have fun, they

talk fun. Yash with Aasna, is a completely different person.”, Aarav replies.

“You don’t get it Aarav, in a relationship, boys tend to show a more unreal side of themselves to their lady love. It’s because they want to adjust with the real nature of the girl whom they have liked because they

look beautiful or pretty to them.”, says love guru Deepak.

“And that’s a stigmatic approach in relationships of most of the youths today. You can like any girl, I like a bunch of girls, but it takes something special to LOVE a girl, like I LOVE Aasna. When you love a girl, you love everything about her, not just the way she looks.”, Aarav retaliates.

He himself calms down afterwards.

“Absolutely! Well speaking of Aasna, how was that ride?! My boi you did it! This is an outstanding development... riding with her on your bullet... Uff!”, says Deepak excitedly.

“All thanks to that Iron Lady Perna, her stubborn head was the reason that happened. I couldn’t believe it, I was in a different world man!”, Aarav replies.

“Then you met Aasna's mother at her home. Describe this. Your meeting with Gaurav uncle was definitely good.”, Deepak asks, not seriously.

“Yeah. This was bit weird. She knew that Papa is a retired lawyer. Then she said Yash earlier that she doesn’t have a good rapport with lawyers.

It was a joke maybe. And while leaving, she said to bring my father next time, she wants to treat him well when he visits. Well it's good and I am definitely going to accompany Papa to Aasna's home next time. But when Garima aunty said that, it felt like, she pressed it on me. She said it deliberately. That's how I felt, I don't know why.", Aarav says briefly.

"Does she doubt, BOTH OF YOU, you and Yash? She might be thinking you both have your sights on her daughter! Alas!", Deepak overreacts.

"No way! She met us for first time! Maybe not in my case. But I was a child back then. It can't be for that reason.", Aarav rejects.

"Then might be much deeper, might be something to do with Atul Uncle. Hmm... much deeper. Anyways. Look, the students have arrived. Oh and there she is... your Laila.", says Deepak.

At a distance from Aarav and Deepak, Aasna and her friend Sarika walk with other students. Aarav ecstatic, looks at her, and is rejoiced by her presence. Suddenly Deepak's phone rings...

Dhadkano main tere geet hai mile hue,

Kya kahu ke sharam se hai lab sile hue

Aasna looks up at Aarav as she enters the room. Aarav feels like waves hitting at him smoothly, smiling ear to ear, eyes melting down at Aasna's gorgeous face adorned with her own smile. Both keep staring at each

other.

Rakhun chupaake main sabse woh Laila,

Maangu zamane se rab se woh Laila...

Kab se main tera hun kab se tu meri Laila

Deepak cuts the calls as it was from a call centre. "Kya timing tha bey phone bajne ka, gazab!", says Deepak softly to himself.

Aarav gets back to his senses as Deepak cuts the call, ruining his mood. He slightly stares at him with a dejected look, Deepak regrets. Then he greets Aasna gently bowing his head down, resting his hands on his

chest. Aasna waves back at him, sits down with Sarika and other students.

"I am delighted to see that you all have joined me. It's a pleasure. Thank you, my junior brothers and sisters, and my own batch mates. This is our new semester, but also, we are at the end of this year. It's been a long time we, the students of Raja Shankar Shah College, have done it. We have to make this happen before this year ends.", says Aarav to all the students.

"What brother?" asks a junior student.

"A college trip. A trip for at least 3-4 days!", announces Deepak!

Everyone starts humming and buzzing.

"But where Aarav?", asks Aasna.

"Its the hills Aasna, the long mountain range, in the outskirts of this city.", Aarav answers.

Aarav is slowly understanding that the relationship of Yash and Aasna is naturally good, but he still wants Aasna to realize his feelings for her. On the other hand, will Deepak be the one to crack down that one thing... that the parents of Aarav and Aasna have in common, as he seems interested?

"WHAT!", in low, subtle yet shocked to death voice, says Sarika.

Sarika is one of the most studious student in this batch in which Aarav, Aasna and Deepak study. Yet among students, she is the most inactive, unresponsive. Every student, which includes Deepak, annoy her. Sarika is friends with only one student in the whole college, that is Aasna. Speaking of Aarav, he never really knew Sarika well, but knows she is a brilliant student.

"Obviously, we have that 0.01% of germ that doesn't goes off after washing the hands with soap.", says Deepak, facing the other side of the room.

"Oye Deepak! Quiet. (Turns to Sarika) Sarika, do you have an issue? You are free to discuss. Everyone can ask any queries and suggest their plans.", says Aarav.

Suddenly, Sarika starts panting. Eyes wide open like some disaster happened. Aasna holds her hand tightly and speaks for her.

“Actually, she is afraid. She doesn’t go out much. Sarika I will go with you.”, says Aasna, comforting her friend.

“I won’t go to high altitude places like those hills, and I don’t...”, says Sarika.

“For once, please for once support us! You don’t take part in co curricular activities of college, never stand up when all of us try to speak our problems to the college heads. This is a trip, of the students, for the students, by the students. Please join us!”, Deepak pleads.

“Deepak Bhaiya is right! We need everyone’s support. After all Aarav Bhaiya has planned this trip in a thought that we just came out of not one but two back to back semesters! We all need a break.”, one of the male students stands up and says.

“And also Aasna, you can’t babysit her always.”, said of the female students.

This enraged Aasna, but also she couldn’t speak here. Her eyes protruded and she pressed her fists tight.

Aarav saw it. And without any hesitation, any second thoughts, speaks for her.

“If making someone feel protective, supportive and trustworthy is babysitting, then I would do it forever, no matter if it’s for a friend, family member or anyone else.”, says Aarav.

Again, Aarav puts a smile on Aasna's face. But that doesn’t affect Sarika.

“Aasna please don’t go.”, Sarika says softly.

“Wow, now you won’t let someone go, because you don’t want to. Are you a queen... *your majesty, you will definitely go to the trip, we will do all the arrangements, which has only you and your friend. Everything will be SPECIAL for you my highness.*”, says Deepak.

He does the royal salute after saying this jokingly. Everyone had a laugh. But Aarav wasn’t taking it.

“Oh sarak udhar. Tujhse na hoga, durbari ke aulaad .”, says Aarav.

Another subtle laugh erupts from the back benches.

“Sarika, please try to understand. We need you to take part in this.”, pleads Aarav.

Sarika moved closer towards Aasna. Her face was terror struck.

“What happened?”, asks a shocked Aarav.

“Aarav please, this girl has an allergy... no no no.. a phobia... dude-o-phobia!”, says Deepak.

But this time Aasna just joined her hands, telling him to stop.

“Actually Aarav, Sarika is just too introvert. Please don’t mind.”, says Aasna .

“Alright, fine I respect that. But Sarika, listen, I know you are a great student, you may not need a break. But this isn’t any college fest or jamming programme. This is a small trip, where you are free to spend your time with Aasna for whole day! That too between the beauty of nature. It is a beautiful place, me and Aasna have went there before.”, Aarav explains.

“What were you doing with Aasna in those hills?”, Sarika questions immediately.

“Aree we were kids back then, we went there with our parents Deepak and I visited that mountain range just few days ago. It’s peaceful Sarika. Please you will love it.”, Aarav clarifies.

“Sarika, I think we must join. Just believe in these students, they are just like us.”, says Aasna.

“But Aasna... umm..”, Sarika contemplates.

“Fine... it’s absolutely fine. We don’t have the support of one, but other students do support us right?”, Deepak asks blatantly.

Everyone says a “Yes”.

“Well, students will be ready, professors will also join if we insist a bit and tell some of the expenses will be handled by students themselves. But that bald headed demon, our beloved principal sir, who can convince him?”, says Deepak.

“I have an idea. Why not we ask our professors, who will be ready to join us, to be our voice to the principal sir? He will definitely consider their request.”, Aasna suggests.

“That’s a very good idea! We just need to do our part by convincing as many students as possible and then the professors of concerned departments. I want to know what departments you all are in. Me and Deepak are in Sociology, Aasna and Sarika in Education... oh shoot.”, says Aarav.

He realized he put himself in a jeopardy by revealing he knew which department Aasna belongs from. She gave a subtle smile. But Aarav was more afraid about Sarika. And he was right, her specs fell off as she stared at him. Sarika quickly wore it back and calmed down.

“Uh... okay.. Please let me know your departments.”, Aarav asks again.

Some students said Mass Communication, Psychology, some said Applied Sciences, and some from Commerce department. These were the students of Campus 3 of the college.

“Incredible! All the streams of this campus are here! Obviously I have good connections! And Aasna, that was a wonderful idea! Wohoo!”, says Deepak.

Saying this, Deepak keeps his closed fist ahead for a fist bump. Aasna gives one. Sarika didn’t acknowledge it.

“Aasna!”, softly screams Sarika.

“Oh hello... maine bas ek fist bump diya.. superman punch nahi.”, says Deepak.

Aarav stared at Deepak as if he would just start a fist fight now. He grabbed his neck tight.

“Tu jaa... yeh scheme tere liye hai hi nahi... nikal yahan se!”, says Aarav.

“Nahi nahi sorry bhai galti se mistake ho gayi. Yeh sab uss Perna ki galti hai.”, says Deepak, still wailing.

“Why you are blaming my sister here!”, Aarav asks agitatedly.

“She always talks with double meaning! Aadat hi bigaad di hai uss aurat....”, says Deepak.

He gets interrupted as Aarav gives him one tight slap on the head. Now he is wailing quietly.

Everyone is laughing inconsistently. Sarika has a smile too, finally.

“Anyways, I think that’s a good plan. Let’s get to work. Start talking to your classmates. Let me and this creature right here know how much the students are taking the initiative. Let’s talk to our professors. But I believe we need that one student that can convince the professors totally that this trip will take place complying with the rules of the college authority. And I think Sarika, you are our best option. You are very much respected within the professors. Please be our main voice. Please.”, Aarav pleads for one last time.

“Yes... please Sarika, for me.”, Aasna pleads too.

“Sarika... I am sorry for everything I just said, I beg you, please support us. Please.”, says Deepak

He now wails to Sarika, kneeling down, joining his hands.

“Okay... If everyone is insisting, I am in.”, Sarika accepts.

“This is miracle... Ganpati Bappa Moriya!!!”, Deepak screams his heart out.

“But one condition.”, Sarika interrupts

“Now what!”, Deepak asks

“If the trip happens, I would need a different vehicle.”, says Sarika.

Deepak stood up quietly, keeping his head down, eyes closed. He breathes heavily, and finally after keeping it in for a long time, the volcano burst out loud.

“AATA MAAJHI SATAKLI HAI... AARAV TAKE A GLASS AND BREAK IT ON MY HEAD!!!!”, Deepak shouts.

“Calm down Deepak! Calm down! Hey boys... take him out.”, says Aarav.

Some male students come and escort Deepak out of the room.

“Madam lets book a different venue for you! Are you mad since birth or some rat ate your brain or did that rat eat your notes and you became mad! Hai Prabhu, Hai Hariram Krishna Jagannatham Prema Nandi! Yeh kyun hai... kahan se aayi hai!”, Deepak ranted till he reached the door.

“Uff... Sarika... listen. There will be one bus for boys and other one for girls. In that bus you can sit behind in the corner with Aasna, okay!” says, Aarav.

“Okay...”, Sarika subtly replies.

“Good. Okay guys and girls, that was a promising, and a bit hilarious discussion. Let’s do it! Thank you.”, says Aarav, as he concludes this meeting.

Everyone starts leaving. Some girls come to Aarav.

“Hey Aarav, can we have your number? If we need any help we will just contact you.”, asks one of the girls.

“Yeah sure... here is it. Note it down... 985...umm”, says Aarav.

He is calling out his number, but then he notices Aasna staring at him with an eyes of suspect.

“Uh... oh! Actually this is my father’s number I forgot, sorry my bad. And I use my number just for official purpose so.. sorry I can’t give one.

If you have any problem just ask me here in the college itself. Is it fine?”, Aarav says.

“Okay... no problem. Thank you.”, said another girl.

They understood the real reason, so they chuckled a bit and left the classroom. Aasna smiles gladly and nods. Both her and Sarika are leaving now. Both Aarav and Aasna wish goodbyes, but before that, he speaks to Sarika.

“Thank you for joining us Sarika. I am grateful that you are on board with us.”, says Aarav.

“Well, I must say, you can make anyone go on board with you. Bye.”, says Sarika, out of nowhere!

Aasna is astonished, and is blushing. Aarav really is the man girls count on! Aarav couldn’t believe that subtle smile on Aasna’s face after winning Sarika’s trust. After they leave, Aarav laughs like a relieved man. His dream of making Aasna realize his feelings is coming closer of becoming true. But Sarika still, seems to finding it difficult to fit in

her new role. She has always been aloof from all this. Deepak doesn't believe her at all.

Can this trip really happen?

Aasna is in her room. She is not feeling tired after returning to college so she sits at her study table and opens her diary. Yes it's time for her to note down her day in college.

"Dear Diary,

Today might have been one of the silliest day in my college. The morning began with Mama waking me up and Papa cooking me a wonderful breakfast, some delicious cheese sandwiches. He has some weird love for milk products. Mama as always, affectionately makes my hair. She asked me the reason Aarav called me in college for. At that time I obviously didn't know. I left for college... met with some of my department mates and that dearest friend of me, Sarika. Today she really amazed me. After our classes, me and her accompany some of the students into a classroom where Aarav and Deepak were waiting for us. Aarav was so delighted to see me, again. His eyes scream out the love he has for me. I am so lucky, wish he was. I hope this isn't burdening his heart. Sarika didn't trust him and anyone at first. Deepak wasn't confident about Sarika being there. Aarav called everyone to discuss about a trip he has planned for college students. The venue, is the same mountains range him, Perna and me visited when we were kids. I couldn't say a no to this. I wanted to go here from a long time. The only person in the room who opposed to this initially was, Sarika. This led to the funniest conversation in my entire life, between her and Deepak. He got so much irritated by Sarika's skimpiness, at one point he had to leave the class. But something makes me feel that they will eventually get along, because Aarav made Sarika join the efforts of all the students involved in making this trip possible. Looks like we all have to gear up. Its going to be a tough process to get the permission from our professors and the principal. I am excited. That's it for today. I'll write to you tomorrow.", Aasna pens down.

After this, she thinks of Yash, and makes a call to him. Someone else picks up.

"Hello... who is this?", asks the person on call.

"I am Aasna, is Yash there? Who is speaking by the way?", says Aasna.

"I am Yash's friend. He comes to play cricket here in this sports club. He is playing right now.", explains the person.

"Oh. No problem, just let him know I called him. Thank you.", says Aasna as she keeps the call.

"Alright. (stares at the phone) Well madam, your friend is playing like a warrior today,(looks up, towards the field) come on Yash!", yells that person in the dugout.

Yash didn't hear it. He is batting for his team, and today he looks in a great touch. He has been hitting some outrageous shots and has scored 144 runs of 127 balls. He is six runs away from a double half century. Bowler runs in at a great speed. Yash's eyes are laser focused, he positions his bat for the big one. Bowler throws the ball, a quick full toss, yorker length! Yash, like a golf club, swings his bat like a huge pendulum! And ball clears above the ropes landing right in front of his team's dugout! He gets the landmark 150 runs! Yash takes his helmet off, and does his signature celebration, kisses his locket. Batter on non striker's end hugs him for his brilliant show today. Opponent team's fielders applaud him. His team in the dugout celebrates. He goes on to play till the end of 50 overs. With a strike rate of 117.19, setting a record best in his sports club today.

"Incredible! That was a fantastic knock man!", says one of Yash's teammate.

"Thanks bro. Don't know... feels like this bat had some unreal energy today.", says Yash.

"You smashed with it all around! Is something reeling in your head or what!", asks another teammate jokingly.

"Not something, but someone. Maybe this bat will be at good use at that time.", Yash says.

He had some seriousness while saying this

"Don't tell me you are going to hit someone with it.", says his teammate.

"If needed I will.... Self defence man! Don't worry.", says Yash.

First he sounded a bit deep, then goes back to his senses. God knows what he is thinking.

“Hey Yash, someone called you when you were batting. The name is Aasna.”, says the teammate who picked up his call.

“Oh shit! I shouldn’t have missed this call! Give my phone!”, Yash regrets.

“Looks like this is someone special!”, one of the teammate teases.

“Shut up man. You have to ball well or I will tell Raunak bhaiya (their captain) to take that stump and fit it inside... anyways.”, Yash revolts.

Everyone laughs in the locker room as they get ready for the second innings.

Seven hours later...

Aarav is in his room. It’s night as he goes to bed after a long day. As he closes his eyes, he remembers that face of Aasna, which left the class today, smiling, happy, blushing secretly. His face is garnished with a smile of his own.

“So this girl is taking over my place in your heart? Huh!”, says a voice.

“Come on Maa, there’s no girl in this universe who will replace you. No one.”, Aarav spoke to his mother.

Like Atul, even he imagines Vedika a lot of times. Right now, she is lying down beside Aarav.

“Not even... Aasna is her name right? Yes, not even her?”, asks Vedika notoriously.

“No Maa. You are the best woman in this world for me.”, Aarav says.

He goes on to pull his mother’s cheeks.

“Ouch! Careful! You really love her, don’t you?”, asks Vedika, a bit seriously.

“What can I say Maa, she terrifies me! At the same time and moment, I feel like watching a beautiful dream. She really is dear to me.”, says Aarav.

“Wow! But someone keeps you from loving Aasna to your full potential. Right?”, asks his mother.

“Not someone, Yash can never ever stop me from feeling for Aasna, but there are some circumstances I can’t change.”, says Aarav, deeply.

“What is it?”, asks Vedika.

“Maa.... I can’t force my feelings upon her. Why do I feel sometimes, that might be, Aasna is compromising for me. She has been put into this friendship with me by Gaurav uncle, her father. She knows about my love for her, and she can’t give that feeling back to me, isn’t she getting controlled by the situation? This must be tough for her.”, Aarav explains.

“Hmm... it must be tough for both of you. But, if the person, that genuine human in both of you has decided to just be good friends with each other, and if your heart has decided to make every possible effort to put a smile on her face, then my son, you don’t need to worry.”, Vedika replies much to Aarav's comfort.

“True... the fact that all of these times will fly past and after college, if I will be able to see her or not, if I have to leave this place for higher studies, all of this haunts me. Will I be able to withstand when I separate from her, maybe fore...”, says Aarav.

He was saying this traumatically, Vedika had to stop him.

“Aarav! Why are you thinking like this! If you truly love her, nothing can separate both of you. Just look at your parents, even my death couldn’t break our bond. Your father still loves me the way he loved... that day, when he confessed to me.”, Vedika tells.

“True Maa, he still loves you unconditionally. But what’s so special about that day?”, asks Aarav.

“This is a question you must ask your father. He will tell you in a way, you will be proud of your love for Aasna after hearing the story. Love is the base of everything in our life, in our relations. Nothing can come in its way. The same goes for your love. And if you fear losing your love, then be honest to your love, the fear will fade away.”, says Vedika.

“Maa... right now... all I know is... I love you the most in this world.”, says Aarav.

Aarav hugs his mother tightly. Vedika gives a humble kiss on her son's forehead, blesses him, sings a lullaby to him, and fades away in the void, coming out of Aarav's imagination. Aarav opens his eyes, looks up at his only picture of his mother on his study table. Tears come out of his eyes, but he is isn't sad. Aarav wipes it off, and goes to sleep.

Aasna worries if this situation burdens Aarav, Aarav worries if Aasna feels controlled by the circumstances. This shows they have grown a feeling of care for each other. Well Yash, living his energetic life, wants to be that one tie breaker in the quest. Where will this competition take these three lovers?

“Aree uncle, I called him to inform something about our planned trip.”, says Deepak as Atul his on the call.

“Oh... He is getting ready, he is having his breakfast.”, Atul answers.

“Please uncle give him the phone for two minutes.”, pleads Deepak.

“Okay okay wait.”, says Atul.

Atul takes the phone out of the charger and takes it to dining table.

Aarav is cherishing is breakfast, cheese maggi. Yep, he was just messing with his sister at the fair.

“Yeh le Aarav, Deepak is on call.”, says Atul.

“Hello Deepak, kya hua?” , asks Aarav.

“Bhai lafda ho gaya, ganda wala!” , says Deepak, tension in his tone.

“What happened?” , asks Aarav putting his fork down.

“Aree Ranjit from Commerce Department, he talked to his professors about the trip. Those old hags... sorry madams went and complained the Principal that we are trying to take the students together without his permission!”, explains Deepak.

“What! God that Principal is already a sick dude. Nitya just had the application ready and today on behalf of all of us Sarika would have presented it to the Dean sir.”, says Aarav.

“Ab kya kare?” , asks Deepak impatiently.

“Let me come. I will be in college at 8:15 am. Jaldi pahunch jaa.”, orders Aarav.

“Okay Aarav, I am leaving.” , says Deepak, as he cuts the call.

“Calm down... it your meal slowly.”, Atul tells his son.

“No time Papa. (Finishes his bowl) Papa, for few days I will return home late.”, answers Aarav.

“Fine, don’t forget your wallet.”, says Atul.

“Yes Papa! By~ oh wait.”, Aarav stumbles.

“Now what?”, asks Atul.

“Om Namo Bhagwate Rudray (×3). Om Namah Shivaay!”, chants Aarav.

“Well done! This lad is learning some good ethics.”, Atul praises.

“Learning from the most ethical man in the world.”, Aarav replies.

That’s a great compliment for a law professor.

“Take care. Goodbye champ.”, says Atul.

He smiles, ear to ear and pats his son on the back.

“Yep. Bye Papa.”, says Aarav, as he leaves the house.

“I promise I didn’t know they would react like this.”, says Ranjit.

“You must know how your professors will take our request!”, says Deepak agitated

“It’s fine, it’s not his fault. I have to bring Sarika and help us out of this.”, says Aarav.

“That girl won’t do it. She cannot.”, says Deepak confidently.

“I doubt it too. This problem will end our hopes of only trip and who could be more happier than her.”, says Nitya, the psychologist in the group.

“Will you guys stop doubting her! She accepted the offer in front of us, she will help us. She is our only hope.”, says Aarav.

“Isko bas bahana chahiye Aasna se baat karne ka.”, Deepak whispers to Ranjit.

“I can hear you. You are not lying though.”, Aarav first tried to rant him, but then accepted the fact.

“Aasna is a pretty girl. You are a charming boy... you both fit perfectly. Wish I was this lucky”, says Nitya.

“Bro everyone feels like this. Then why didn’t you do this. That idiot Yash has our nice girl for WHAT!”, Deepak laments.

“Han... 50 rupiya kaat overacting ka.”, says Aarav.

“Oh chor bazaar ke Akshay Kumar... stop using his dialogues all the time, warna tujhe chin ta taa kar dunga.”, Deepak replies hilariously.

“Says an Aparshakti Lite.”, Aarav counters.

Ranjit and Nitya can't stop laughing.

“Can't be Akki's 1%, trying to impress Shilpa Shetty who is happy with her Raj Kundra.”, says Deepak.

“Ae Deepak this is too much, Kundra? Seriously? Yash isn't that bad yaar.”, Aarav says and everyone laughs out loud.

“Okay enough jokes. Let's get back to the problem.”, says Deepak.

“Yes, you guys go to Principal sir's office. I will be there with Sarika.”, says Aarav as he leaves.

“And Aasna.”, says Nitya from behind.

“Yeah... the application?”, says Aarav.

“Oh... (takes an envelope out of her shirt pocket) here it is.”, says Nitya, giving him the letter.

Aarav gives a nod and walks off. He makes his way to bring the iron lady Sarika, who was sitting with her golden girl, Aasna, in the Education Department cabin. Aarav makes his way into the room, but stops at the door immediately.

“Is this how you enter into a teacher's cabin? Without asking the professor.”, says Aasna and Sarika's Education lecturer, Madhuri ma'am.

“Sorry ma'am! I saw these two talking to each other so I thought no one is in department except them.”, explains Aarav.

“Do you know them?”, Madhuri asks.

“Obviously ma'am! Why would have I thought of entering the room are sitting if I wouldn't have known them.”, Aarav answers.

“He is Aarav ma'am from the Sociology Department.”, says Aasna.

“Oh Aarav... Aarav Verma. So you must have come here to talk about the trip all of you have planned to go, right?”, says Madhuri.

“Umm yes ma'am... I need Sarika to come with me. We have to go to the Principal's office.”, says Aarav.

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“Wait why? What happened? And why me?”, Sarika asks, completely panicked after hearing her name.

“Calm down! Let me explain, the problem is, someone has complained the principal that we are not even planning, but taking a large number of college students to the trip without his permission and the consent of teachers.”, Aarav replies.

“No! This is absolutely wrong, we all are asking our professors, like we did to you ma'am.”, says Aasna.

“Okay... This is not a surprise. Aarav Verma, as you are a student of Sociology, your social works in the college is well known. You are the one who gathers students to speak their problems out to the professors, gathering students to get the Principal's permission for fests, functions, jamming sessions and what not. And now this trip. Some professors must have been fed up of this, aren't they? Why don't you become the President of Student Union Mr. Verma?”, says Prof. Madhuri.

Aarav had his head held down. Even though the professor had an unserious tone, the words generated a pin drop silence in the room. Aasna is looking at Aarav with regretful eyes. Aarav brings his eyes up, looks at Aasna, and smiles, as if he accepts he made a mistake.

“Well, I will allow both of them to leave with you... and I will buy some trekking equipment online. It's difficult to climb those mountains without support for a middle aged woman like me.”, says Prof. Madhuri.

All the three students had a delighted look on their face. Sarika was shocked with the sudden turn of event. This lecturer pranked these kids like a chad.

“Don't mind those fat brained professors, these are literal midlife crisis. Go and make your move, principal sir will definitely agree.”, says Madhuri.

The students were really happy after hearing that. Aasna and Sarika got up from their seats.

“Aasna, Aarav just called for Sarika, I know I just said, but why are you leaving?”, asks Prof. Madhuri.

“Uh... because ma’am you just said that I can leave.”, Aasna answers.

“You could have asked why did I say that, but you didn’t. Did you already made your plan to leave with Aar... ahem ahem!”, says Prof. Madhuri cheekily.

She is being the smart lady she is.

“No ma’am, I... aaah... I have to accompany Sarika wherever she goes so I have to leave. Sarika let’s go. Thank you Ma’am.”, Aasna says very hesitantly

“It’s becoming a news.”, Aarav whispers slowly as Aasna is walking towards him out of the door.

“Shut up!”, Aasna replies slowly.

She again stomps Aarav's toes as she walks out with Sarika.

“Maaa! Ouch... Thank you Ma’am. Aaaahh!”, says Aarav.

The professor had a soft chuckle at that moment. As Aarav, Aasna & Sarika walk out, two students, a girl and a boy look at them in an awkward manner.

“What happened, any problem?”, asks Aarav.

“Uh no nothing.”, says the boy.

“We are just bit staggered by the fact Sarika is now mixing with boys. Nothing serious lol.”, says the girl.

“Ohoo what’s there to be shocked. Let’s go!”, says Aasna a bit agitate.

The three students leave.

“Aasna... I felt a bit uncomfortable by the the way they looked at you and Aarav. Why I am sensing something bad?”, says Sarika, very cautiously as they walked ahead.

“Just two more people, who think I am against them. It’s not my fault they aren’t participating. Just leave it Sarika.”, says Aarav.

The two students look at each other, and nod their head. Are they suspecting something? But this is a situation now. How will the students manage to get a green ticket for the trip Aarav is gonna give everything to make it happen. Will this become a major setback to what he aims for? For now, things are still nice between them. But those two students, are they trying to do something? Let’s see.

Here they are. Bro has got Aasna too. You were right Nitya.”, says Ranjit, goes softer in the second line.

Nitya looked down, smiles and nods in approval. Seems like she was proud about her correct assumption, but this could mean something else.

“This connection is growing. I am so happy.”, says Deepak.

“Okay... Sarika, take this application. And go ahead.”, says Aarav.

“Can you explain me what I have to do and why?”, asks Sarika, anxiously

“See, uss din itna sar phodne ke baad the same question.”, Deepak replies.

“Deepak wait. See... you have to take this application Sarika and give it to Principal sir. Then explain him that with this permission we want to make sure that the students are going to make this trip happen, complying with the rules of college authority. The allegations made by professors were wrong. That’s it.”, Aarav tells briefly.

“Aasna... just write it down somewhere.”, Sarika jokes.

“Take a permanent marker and write it down in your palm.”, mocks Deepak.

“Deepak, for a second be quiet. Sarika you might be the only student, who can make him agree with us.”, encourages Nitya.

“Yes, we really believe he will listen to you.”, says Ranjit.

“See Sarika, they all believe in you, won’t you keep their trust?”, Aasna asks.

“Hmm.”, hums Sarika, with an unconfident look.

“Madam please help us... you need help? Take your bestie too with you! But please, jokes apart, I trust you! Go and please persuade bald psycho.”, Deepak pleads again.

Sarika smiles a bit and nods her head in approval.

Deepak has a face of relief.

“Sarika... don’t ruin this like last time.”, Deepak commands quickly.

“No I will go.”, Sarika replies.

“Thank you so much!”, says Deepak. Everyone is looking at Deepak and Sarika and are delighted by this weird but fun relation of both of them.

“Will someone join me? Principal sir won’t consider from one student, even if it’s me. Why would he just agree with me?”, says Sarika.

“I agree. We need someone bit aggressive. Like not totally aggressive, but a bit modest. Like that person will make sure Principal sir agree, no matter what.”, says Nitya.

“Deepak is best when it comes to aggressiveness.”, opines Ranjit.

“No no... I won’t. Aasna you go na. You both are the best pair in the college. Sir will agree like a Raju getting his job on wheel chair.”, Deepak says.

“Raju was on wheel chair, because he fell off from the window of his Principal's room. If you don’t go right now, I will go into the room and throw you off the window.”, warns Aarav, jokingly.

“First throw your feelings at Aasna. Completely at one go!”, Deepak murmurs into his ears.

“Deepak... (drags him to a corner) please accompany Sarika, she will feel awkward if she goes inside all by her own.”, Aasna pleads.

“Okay... I will. Kahan phas gaya yaar!”, Deepak laments softly.

Deepak and Sarika go into the main door, with the application. The peon stops them at the waiting area.

“Wait, sir is having a webinar. It will end in few minutes.”, says the peon.

“Aree yaar! Tell me exactly when will the webi... wait a second.”, says Deepak.

He suddenly hears something from the office. Deepak brings his ears close to the other door. He hears the Principal listening to a ghazal of Jagjit Singh. He got infuriated. But didn’t say anything. Sarika also felt wrong but she didn’t react.

“Kab khatam hoga aapke sir ka ‘webinar?’”, Deepak asks sarcastically.

“Two minutes beta, two minutes. Eh...”, replies the peon awkwardly.

The two student wait for some time. The ghazal could be heard well. It was “Tumko Dekhya Toh Ye Khayal Aaya”, sung by Jagjit ji. As they waited, Sarika keeps the application on an adjacent table, and unties her hair. Deepak looks at her, a bit stunned.

“Oh wow.”, Deepak thinks.

Aaj phir dil ne ek tammanna ki...

“Sarika looks better with her hair open man! Much prettier. Bol deta hun. Konsa pyaar karta hun jo bolne se phategi.”, Deepak thinks.

Aaj phir dil ne ek tammanna ki...

“Yes... let’s say.”, Deepak thinks again.

He gets ready. Sarika, as she straightens her hair a bit, looks up and notices Deepak looking at her vividly. She doesn’t ask anything but looks away.

Aaj phir dil ko humne samjhaya...

“No, leave it. Deepak... control!”, Deepak comes out of the déjà vu.

Aaj phir dil ko humne samjhaya...

Sarika ties her hair back. Holds the application. Deepak looks away. As the music ends... Deepak knocks the door.

“Who is there? Who is interrupting me while my important meetings?”, the Principal speaks boldly.

But he is still in an ecstatic mood after hearing the ghazal.

“Sir, we are the students of your BIG... and prestigious college. May we come in?”, asks Deepak notoriously.

“Sure! Come in my lovely stud... oh... Deepak. Deepak Mishra. What the... Sarika Agarwal! Please come in! Why have you both come here together?”, the Principal says.

“Anupam sir, there’s a problem. Please help us!”, says Deepak.

“Do I look like your department professor, why will I solve your problems?”, Anupam replies.

“Sir! He didn’t mean to say that. He meant that a complain has been made against us by some professors to you.”, Sarika explains.

“Oh yes! About the trip. I was going to call up that lad. How could you all make such an enormous effort, without the permission of the college authorities? Is the trip happening on our college ground? And who is that leader of yours... Aarav Verma. The complain is against him, where is he. Bring him in.”, Anupam rants.

“Sir... first please try to...” , says Deepak.

He tries to intervene but fails.

“Please bring him, I want to talk to him!”, the Principal commands.

Sarika goes out to bring Aarav.

“Sir, see... we have asked all our professors about this trip!”, Deepak pleads.

“That’s for sure. That’s why I was informed about it. Or else how I would have known about it?”, replies Anupam.

“Sir we would have told you about it if we were given some time. By tomorrow we were going to come to you with an official application.”, explains Deepak.

Meanwhile Sarika calls for Aarav outside the Principal’s office.

“That’s it. The Principal is mad at us. No!”, yells Nitya.

“I am really sorry guys.”, Ranjit apologizes.

“Not your fault Ranjit. Aarav, you are the hopes of many students. Please do something.”, says Aasna.

“I am going to try my best.”, Aarav says, with a sigh.

Aasna goes closer to Aarav. Aarav stood still.

“I want to go there... Again. Please... I believe in you.”, Aasna whispers slowly to Aarav.

“If I fail... can the both of us go? Just me and you.”, Aarav replies, and smiles ecstatically.

Aasna smiles back. Aarav has never seen her smiling this close. He is feeling the absolute bliss of the moment. Aasna has started liking his subtle pick up lines gradually. She simply likes it. The fact all these

lines carry that sweet charm of Aarav and the respect for her, affects Aasna pleasantly.

Aasna walks back smiling. Aarav keeps looking at her gladly. Nitya and Ranjit are well aware what's going on here, they are smiling too. Nitya looked away.

"Aarav we trust you. Go ahead.", says Nitya.

And with this, he goes into the office with Sarika.

"Welcome Aarav Verma! Aapka hi intezaar tha hehe... aaiye aaiye. Please have the seat. You are very a special student of this college." Anupam taunts.

Aarav seats down with a dejected look on his face.

"Before I get to you... Sarika, why are you getting along with them? These boys are notoriously manipulating you. Keep focussing on your studies.", says Anupam.

"Sir don't do this! We are not manipulating her, we asked her and she agreed to help us and go to the trip!", Deepak explains.

"How many times did you ask her for going with you?", asks Anupam.

Deepak goes numb.

"Sarika, you must answer this question. Answer me honestly.", says Anupam.

"Sir... many times.", Sarika answers slowly.

Aarav, who had his head down all this time, closed his eyes.

"That means Sarika didn't want to go to this trip, but you all asked this girl and made your requests so many times and in ways, that she had to accept the offer, isn't it? Am I right Sarika?", Anupam digs in.

"Yes sir.", says Sarika.

She clinched her fists, because she regrets about this.

Sarika feels she is failing Aarav and many students. Deepak looks at her unhappily. Aarav brought his head up.

"I think that's enough reason to make you understand that the trip, isn't happening.", Anupam concludes.

“Sir, we asked her if she would like to go with us many times possible, because we don’t want to make Sarika feel different from us. She is our batchmate, she is our friend, and to ask her frequently is not just a sign of respect, but also a sign of considering her as one of the elite students of this institution, who will not only accept our offer, but will help the hundreds of students who want a genuine, pleasant break from continuous studies and academic duties. It would be a small trip. All we were doing was asking the respectable professors if they would like to join us. Then we would have taken this application (takes it from Sarika and shows it Anupam) to the head of the staff, to allow the teachers to participate in this. Then with another application in which we would have mentioned about the subject, that is to organize a college trip, mentioning the fact the interest has been assured by both students and teachers; we would have come to you and respectfully asked for it. Then it was upon you, to allow this trip to happen or not. Without your permission, we don’t even plant a single tree sampling in this college, how would we take so many students and teachers to a trip? And yes, teachers also need a rest from daily life, not a typical rest, but a time out in which they can do something different, and something as productive as teaching hundreds of students. You have been a student, you are also a professor, you must understand what we go through. Don’t we deserve a break? In my eyes, everyone does, even you too sir. You will be cordially invited in this trip. It’s upon you. Not us. If it’s a yes, we are on. If not, not only Sarika , we all will fully focus on our studies as you want. But please, think about it sir. Please.”, says Aarav.

He speaks out in one go. Sarika and Deepak are looking at him astonished. Anupam, listened to every word staring into his eyes. The Principal nods his head, smirks softly.

Aasna, Nitya and Ranjit and standing with whole lot of nervousness outside the office. In few moments, Deepak, Sarika and Aarav come out of the office. Nitya and Ranjit run towards them and ask what transpired from the meeting. Aasna is looking at Aarav with all hopes, with a slight feeling of all the hopes sinking down. Aarav looks at her, in an apologetic manner at first. Everyone felt this is over.

“We are..... GOING TO THE HILLS!!!!”, screams out Deepak

This delights everyone there! Nitya and Ranjit celebrate with Deepak. Sarika, who was almost in tears in losing her only task which was given to her with all the trust from her mates, hugs Aasna tightly and quietly sobs in her shoulders. Aasna calms her down. Aarav is the one looking at everyone, with immense happiness. Aasna looks at him, she is proud, and impressed by him. But the way he is controlling his excitement right now, Aasna just can't understand how much she likes him now. Aarav eventually looks at her, and smiles relieved. Aasna thanks him for the effort. Aarav welcomes her back.

The celebration continues.

"That's the folder you are looking for.", says Atul.

He takes out a folder from his cupboard. Atul's hand seems to shiver a bit.

"Yes, this is the case I want to study on. Thank you sir.", Yash replies.

"That's a good case to study. Why are you interested in this particular case?", asks Atul.

"It's something I want to see, what happened, why did it happen, and why did it lead to... my parents separating, after seven years of relation, of nothing, but fighting with each other in the court. Maa won my custody, and since then, it's been like a duty for me to keep her happy.", explains Yash.

This is about something he never shared anyone about, except Aasna obviously. Atul's heart skipped a bit. He couldn't believe the individual accused in this case is really Yash's father. He got back to his senses and enquires his student.

"He was your father? I never knew about this. I am sorry if this hurts you. This folder belongs to you.", says Atul.

"No problem sir. You are like a father figure to me. I never felt the void of a father.", says Yash.

Atul pats his hand on Yash's head, blessing him. Yash thanks but eyes are focused towards the door.

Aarav was standing there and heard it all. Deepak was there too.

“And also a brother in advance sir.”, Yash completes his words.

“Aarav, welcome home. Deepak... how are you? After a long time.”, asks Atul.

“Uncle I just came to take a digest from Aarav. We are preparing a report together. That’s why.”, Deepak explains.

“Oh good. But let’s talk for a few moments. Aarav, you can talk to Yash till then.”, Atul says and accompanies Deepak.

Aarav sits beside Yash. Both look into each other’s eyes for some time. Aarav starts the conversation.

“I am sorry for that (points at the folder). We both had to be children to single parents. What a game of life.”, says Aarav.

“Indeed. Aasna brings that balance in my life. For all the years I have been with her, I have never felt lonely.”, Yash says emotionally.

“Don’t mind... I feel she does the same for me too. But I can understand for you it’s much deeper. She is pretty happy today... so don’t be sad. Be the chad you are.”, Aarav encourages.

“I always am.”, replies Yash.

“Yet you never have been open about your feelings.”, tells Aarav.

“What do you mean?”, asks Yash.

“Have you ever expressed your love for her, in front of the world?”, asks Aarav.

“Umm... no. We never needed it.”, answers Yash.

“Do it once, you see, when I love Aasna, people can see it in my eyes. You need to do it too.”, challenges Aarav.

“So you think I can’t? Oh boy now I have to!”, Yash says boldly.

“Good luck then!”, says Aarav.

Both stand up and walk towards the door.

Atul and Deepak are having a very friendly and funny conversation.

“Deepak, why do they talk so competitively? All the time.”, Atul asks.

“Uncle... the thing is... they love the same girl. That’s why.”, Deepak answers.

“Aree Deva! Who is the girl?”, asks Atul.

“Uncle you know her well, Aasna. She is the girl behind this weird but good friendship between both of them.”, says Deepak.

“Oh.”, says Atul, absolutely stunned.

He looks at both the boys, chiseled, who came out of the room. Deepak, looks at Atul, and thinks what did this revelation do... that it absolutely froze Atul's feet.

This is absolutely shocking for Atul. He never thought this is going to be something he will be introduced to. He has no problem with Aarav's love for Aasna. He is least interested in Yash's relationship. Aasna is bit of his concern because she is the link between the boys. The matter is... Aasna is the daughter of Garima. And this haunts Atul. A new side of Yash is known now, his revelation of Yash being a son to the guilty of that case shocked him too. Aasna saying Perna that Yash had to do a lot to win her heart now makes sense. Aarav realized he has impressed Aasna, so he wants to test Yash and his love. The trip to mountains is on!

“Tanuja, was it even necessary to for me to be here? You know I don’t like wasting my money in these prashaad and diyas. Worshiping the deity's in home is enough.”, laments Varun.

Him, his wife Tanuja, his daughter Perna, and Aasna's family has come for a Puja happening in their colony. It’s Durga Puja. All of them have dressed up traditionally for the occasion.

“Varun, these are the times when you must worship our Mother Goddess, to protect us from all the evils. Do it happily.”, tells Gaurav.

“Aate hi ashubh bol rahe ho. Don’t say a word! Perna give me that coconut I might just break it on his head.”, says Tanuja with mild anger.

The girls laughed a bit

“Calm down Tanuja. Let the Mata Rani in you stay calm and composed. Perna is here already.”, Garima taunts.

“Garima Auntie not again! But if really we had to be the goddesses, then I would be Parvati and Aasna would be Saraswati.”, says Perna.

“Aise Parvati ka Shiv banne se acha hai bramhachari aur bairaag raho.”, replies Varun.

Everyone laughs.

“Papa! Aasna everyone is teasing me!”, Perna says.

She walks closer to Aasna and hugs her arm.

“Okay baba... now no one will tease Perna, my lovely Perna... okay!”, says Aasna humorously, but so sweetly that Perna hugs her tightly for some moment.

“Your daughter hasn’t changed a bit, saved me that day on the trip to hills from yours and Atul's notorious beating... and defends my daughter today. Our children are absolute gems.”, says Varun to Gaurav softly.

“Even that lad Aarav. A very pure human being. I see his mother’s ethics filled in his heart.”, replies Gaurav.

“Bhabhi definitely blesses all of our children from above.”, says Varun.

Both the fathers are very emotional right now.

“Have you told about that incident to Perna before?”, asks Gaurav.

“No! Never... Tanuja still fears of what happened that day. She must never see the day when our kids will know what happened between Garima Bhabhi and Atul years ago.”, Varun answers heavily.

“I wished all of that never happened. My wife, is still hurt. The kids must never know.”, says Gaurav.

“But right now we must join our wives and daughters in the Puja.”, says Varun.

“Yes. Lets go.”, replies Gaurav.

They both stand in line with the ladies. Gaurav starts reciting the “Durga Ashtakama” mantra after providing the offerings to the big model of the deity. Others join hands and pray to Mother Goddess devotionally. Varun however didn’t do it that way just casually acted like praying. After the prayers are over, all of them start moving. In the hush and rush in that ground. Somebody calls Aasna. Aasna hears it and starts looking around and finds standing adjacent to a wall, it is Yash. He is too, in traditional look. Aasna is absolutely blissed seeing him. She informs Perna about it and goes to meet her lover. Perna persuades the elders to move ahead towards the sitting area.

“Yash! It’s an absolute pleasure to see you here. You look absolutely dashing in this blue kurta!”, appreciates Aasna.

“You look like an angel today! What a beauty Maata Rani has created.”, says Yash, slightly caresses her face.

“So, with whom have you come here?”, asks Aasna, holding his hands.

“Just some friends from my college. They are going to dance in some time, they have their partners, I don’t.”, Yash says, very cleverly.

“Oh. Then go and find one.”, challenges Aasna.

“Come on, you know I won’t choose anyone other than you.”, answers Yash.

“The answer I wanted to hear. But unfortunately, I have come with my parents.”, tells Aasna.

“Well if you won’t come with me, join me on your own later on.”, says Yash.

“Fine... have fun.”, says Aasna adamantly, as she goes to sit with her parents.

“Where were you?”, Garima asks Aasna.

“Just a friend Mama.”, replies Aasna as she sits down.

“Where is he?”, asks Prerna slowly.

“You might see him in some time.”, replies Aasna.

And as she said.. After few minutes, a group of young teens and adults started gathering near the sitting area. Music starts playing. And all of them have started dancing to the tune. A lot of songs for the Navratra festival song were being played. But as soon as one of the Darshan Raval hits started playing, Yash with his friends started dancing in rhythm. Step to step... Everything went in sync with the song. He deliberately danced in front of Aasna and co. to persuade her mind to dance with him. Aasna and Prerna watch the dance and wanted to join badly. Prerna finally got up, and held Aasna's hand. Aasna tried to pull it off, but Prerna didn't give a heed, and took Aasna along with her to the dance floor. The parents are absolutely delighted. And then what, like any hero and heroine, Yash and Aasna just start dancing on their own with the music. Aasna had never seen this Yash before. Yash is absolutely carefree and makes Aasna feel like a bird with wings of freedom. The love these two have for each other could be now seen by everyone present there. Varun and Tanuja are a bit shocked but are enjoying it. Gaurav couldn't believe it, somewhere inside he thought Aasna is more close to Aarav. Garima though, is starting to panic. But she controls her emotions with a smile. Prerna, she is busy dancing with the kids and eventually joins Yash and Aasna. After the song is over, Yash and Aasna hug each other subtly, Prerna kneels down to breathe in some air. That hug sends Garima into a hidden rage. She got up and walked up to the other side of the sitting area. Gaurav understood the reaction, but decided to take care of it afterwards. All of the three youngsters go to sit back with the elders. Yash greets Gaurav, Varun and Tanuja, he didn't miss it this time. Without hesitating, Yash sits down beside Aasna. One of Yash's male friend tried to sit near Prerna casually, but Prerna got up and almost thrashed

that guy and he ran away. Everyone laughed and started a light conversation before leaving for home. Yash impressed Aasna to an unexpected, unbelievable extent. Aarav's challenge was worth it.

“Come and have a seat.”, says Atul.

He calls his son to the dining table after he returns from the Puja celebration in his area.

“Feels like something is brewing today.”, Aarav replies.

“Yes, today your father wants to have a brief conversation with you, we haven’t had one for a long time.”, says Atul.

“That’s wonderful. Last time we talked about my plans to go out of state and study, for which I have already made some preparations.”, says Aarav.

“Very good. As expected from my son. Today we are not going to talk about your studies though.”, says Atul.

“Oh then, what is it Papa?”, asks Aarav.

“Hmm... there’s one favourite song in the 90s.... *“Raja ko rani se pyaar ho gaya... pehli nazar main... pehla pyaar ho gaya..”*”, sings Atul.

“Melodious! What is it Papa?”, Aarav asks excitedly.

“That’s the case with you, isn’t it?”, Atul queries.

“Umm... What? I didn’t get it.”, Aarav asks confused. “You are in LOVE! And you didn’t tell me huh!”, says Atul and goes on to throw a table coaster on his son.

“Papa! How did you know?!”, asks a surprised Aarav.

“Tera baap hun saale. And I mastered this art before you. So nothing will be hidden, as long as I have my eyes taking a note of every move of yours.”, says Atul.

“Oh my god. It’s true... I am... it’s a bit complicated.”, says Aarav hesitantly.

“Yes I know who it is. It’s obvious that it’s complicated.”, Atul replies.

“What!? Who told you about this Papa!? Prerna? ... Yash?.... DEEPAK!?” , asks Aarav.

“Yes... your best friend ever. His tongue slipped out.”, Atul answers and chuckles.

“I will take care of him. But yes.... Aasna, can't be more than just friends with me.”, says Aarav with a sigh.

“Does she know you love her at least?”, asks Atul.

“She does Papa. But she can't do anything about it, and it's my fault.”, answers Aarav.

“So she just knows you love her, but you haven't expressed that yet.”, clarifies Atul.

“As long as Yash is there, it's difficult Papa! I can't go against his will like, I mean in some way, we both are friends too.”, says Aarav.

“Yash, a boy is like you is in your way. And you can't clear this obstacle? You are my son Aarav! I had a bigger obstacle in my way.”, says Atul.

“Who was that Papa? Someone between you and Maa!? I can't imagine!”, says Aarav.

“Your Nana Ji.”, replies Atul.

“Nana Ji! He is sure a bit rough. How did you manage to make it happen with Maa then?”, asks Aarav excitedly.

“So it was like a matter of few minutes, but those were the toughest seven minutes of my life. Me and your mother, Vedika were never in a 'romantic' relationship. We were practicing law in the same institute, we

became friends there. As you know, your Dadi Ji saw me once with her, and she fell in love with Vedika at first sight. She was seeing dreams of me and Vedika being together. I also liked the kind of woman your mother was, brave and beautiful. So I thought it was a match. So a rebellious man of 28, made his way to her home, to propose her for marriage.”, Atul tells.

“And then! Then what!”, asks Aarav, now almost at the edge of his seat.

“Get out of my house you notorious lad!”, says Bhupendra Rathore, Vedika's arrogant Rajasthani father.

“But sir, I really like her! And I know she likes me too!”, retaliates a young Atul after getting pushed out of the main door.

“Oh shut up! You scoundrels can go to any limit to grab the young girls! I know all of your tricks!”, replies Rathore.

“Uncle, me and Vedika are lawyers! When will I have the time to to be a Romeo?!” , says Atul.

“Stop arguing with me you nasty boy. Go away!”, says Rathore.

“Sir, she has told me she wants to marry a lawyer. What’s wrong with me, Vedika!”, calls Atul.

As a young Vedika looks from behind , inside the house. She didn’t say a word but gestures him to be quiet.

“How dare you talk to my daughter in her own house! I know and even I want my daughter to marry a lawyer. But not you! Ask your grandfather why!”, says Bhupendra.

“Oh... that case... something happened when none of us were alive! During British rule, one of your ancestors was a Zamindar who looted the fellow farmers. Years after my father fought the case for the farmers against your uncle, the grandson of that Zamindar, and the farmers won the case and your family had to return a lot of money to those helpless people who yearned for justice for long time. Is that the reason you don’t want your daughter to be with me?”, Atul narrates.

“Exactly. Why did my uncle and father suffered for a past mistake? They didn’t loot anyone, whoever that Zamindar was, he did it.”, says Bhupendra.

“That’s the point, why must we pay for the mistakes done by our ancestors. Uncle, that was about the farmers, not my father and your family. They deserved the justice. Here, it’s also not about you and my father, it’s about us, me and Vedika. We have talked about this, she said you won’t allow it. That’s why I came here. She wants to be with me, I want to be with her too. Both of us are growing together, not just in our careers, but life too. Her dreams will become a reality, with me. My mother loves your daughter’s her soul. It’s a true man asking your daughter’s hand, a responsible son asking your love and trust.

Please, let me be your daughter's next man. I want to win that honour from you, respectfully. Please.", Atul pleads.

"So, did you confess it? Tell me Papa!", asks Aarav anticipated.

"Boy, did I... it was the most memorable moment of my life.", says Atul.

I love you Vedika.... WILL YOU MARRY ME!", announces Atul.

Everyone in the house looked at each other. But Vedika alone looked towards Atul, with a smile in her face, and tear of happiness dropping down her left eye. Seeing that, Bhupendra walks towards her daughter. Vedika wipes her tears.

"I can say no to you. I have taken care of you for the past 28 years, I have the right. But those tears, that smile, brought by that man outside our door, I can't say anything to them. After all, it's yours.", says Bhupendra.

This shocks Vedika a bit.

"Hey you... Atul... make sure... you... NEVER MAKE HER CRY AGAIN! Or else I will break each and every bone in your body!", says Bhupendra loudly.

"Stop it!", says her wife.

"Thank you so much Baba.", says Vedika.

Saying this, she runs out of the door, goes down the stairs on the verandah and hugs Atul tightly. Atul lives the moment happily.

Aarav is looking at his dad, amazed.

"If I can surpass that obstacle, why can't you surpass yours? It's much easier. I know you can, if your rebel heart can help hundreds of students of your college experience the best trip to the hills that you love going to, why not the same heart express it's love to the girl of your life?", says Atul.

"I will..... I will have to. I will do it Papa.", answers Aarav, confidently.

“Good. Oh wait... speaking of Aasna, her father sent me a video you might like to watch.”, says Atul as he takes out his phone and opens the chat of him and Gaurav.

“Oh sure Papa.”, says Aarav as he takes the phone from his father.

It was the Puja celebration in Gaurav colony. He can see Aasna and Yash dancing. He can see the love being exchanged. All of this sends Aarav into the most inspiring point in his love ever. He has finally found the courage to not only express his feelings to Aasna, but to express it in a way he would have never thought to. He has the right place to do it. The place where him and Aasna met for the very first time. How will he do that? This is going to be interesting!

*F*ifteen years ago...

“Varun, pass me the plates, we will keep it here.”, says Gaurav.

“Here you go. Prerna, beta thoda side ho jaayo.”, Varun tells her daughter.

“Shh... no Papa. Don’t say anything, they will find me.”, says a little Prerna, as she was hiding behind the tent.

“Okay okay... now give me some space.”, says Varun.

Prerna moves a bit towards the side. But she has already been heard. As she tried to peak from the other side, someone was waiting for her.

“Dhapa! Hehe! Thank you Chacha, I found Preru because of you.”, says Aarav.

“Oh teri! You found her but you scared me rather. Badmash kahinka.”, says Varun.

“Papa you ruined it, now let’s find the other one. (Gets up) Where are you Aasna!”, says Prerna.

“Aasna is her name. Okay. You go towards the left, I go right.”, says Aarav.

“Fine... let’s find the smartest girl of all.”, says Prerna.

They keep finding her for a long time. Aasna was hiding behind a tree, but something caught her eyes and she was totally into it. Aarav, after a lot of hunting, finally found her. But seeing her focussed towards that sight in the river streaming down the mountain, he just stood beside Aasna and starts gazing at the thing she was indulged in.

“That village... it’s a small place where people live.”, said Aarav.

“Oops! When did you come here? I forgot we were playing hide and seek.”, says a shocked Aasna.

“Sorry for shocking you like that. I didn’t wanted to disturb after I saw you looking at that village.”, says Aarav.

“Yes, I was thinking, how do people live in such a small area? Do they have the schools, parks, hotels, shops and whatever we have in the city, which will help the people there live as happily as we do? It’s just a land, with lots of homes and trees, in the middle of river, covered by these mountains. How do they live?”, asks Aasna.

For a girl of five years, that’s a lot to think about.

“Umm... I don’t know... maybe we will find some of my favourite candies there!”, says a little Aarav.

Urban kids do have zero knowledge of village life.

“Haha! I wish we find some. But Papa told me about this village once, when it was bed time. He said everyone there sings to Radha and Krishna.”, says Aasna.

“Radha and Krishna? I know them from our story books and tv shows.”, says Aarav.

“Papa said they pray them and sing and dance for them. I think Radha and Krishna are special for the people in that village. Papa sang me one of the songs as a lullaby that night.”, says Aasna.

I don’t know about this. I hope we find the answers to your question soon!”, says Aarav.

“When?”, asks Aasna.

“When both of you will grow up. Not now.”, says Garima, as she found the kids standing near the tree

“Oh! Mama... we will not. We can’t cross that river.”, says Aasna.

“Yes, now let’s go back to the tent, it’s getting dark. Come beta.”, says Garima, calls Aarav with her too.

“Yes aunty.”, says Aarav

The kids go ahead of Garima, as she walks behind them. As they reach the tent, Aarav and Aasna meet up with Perna. Gaurav and Varun are setting up some woods for evening, Tanuja is here preparing for food, and Atul seems to have some time of his own near a tree. Garima seeing others indulged in work and Atul standing alone looking towards the sky, she builds up some courage, and goes towards him.

“Atul, why are you standing here alone?”, asks Garima.

“Ah... Garima Bhabhi... nothing, just looking at the stars.”, answers Atul.

“I know, I am not the person you want to talk to, but, I still can’t believe.. Vedika... I was crushed after hearing about her. I felt like, it’s all my fault. When I heard the news, I felt like a culprit. It’s been years, I could

never say it to her, but please apologize me for that day Atul ji.”, says Garima as she starts breaking down a bit.

“Garima Bhabhi! Don’t do this! She definitely must have forgiven you. Please don’t be sorry. It’s my request to you.”, pleads Atul.

He gently holds the hands she joined, and tried to calm her down.

“I still can’t believe, I did something so wrong out of anger. Her demise was absolutely devastating for me.”, Garima says.

“The woman who had the purest heart, died of stroke. Life is just, unbelievable.”, says Atul heavily.

“I hope... Vedika is resting peacefully.”, says Garima.

“Hmm... lets get back to the tent.”, says Atul, in a bit agitated tone.

“Atul... I hope... you have forgiven me. I can’t live with this guilt forever.”, says Garima, very carefully.

Atul, who was walking ahead of Garima, stops.

“Garima Bhabhi, this might be bitter but, I had never seen Vedika so disturbed, so scared like she was that day. She was terrified. She lost all of her will. And eventually, I lost her. Sorry Bhabhi, even if it was not for long, I can’t apologize. I can never ever, come out of that pain.”, says Atul, and starts walking towards the tent.

Garima stops walking, stood beside a tree, she was almost breaking out, as her fist landed straight on the trunk hard in anger.

Present day...

Deepak is suddenly pressed from behind by Aarav on a tree. A batch mate held Deepak’s hands tight, wrapped to the tree from the other side.

All the students have arrived to the mountains for the trip.

“Aarav chhod de bhai!”, Deepak pleads.

“Kya zarurat thi Papa ko batane ki, mujhse pucha batane se pehle?”, asks Aarav, forcing Deepak to the tree trunk with his arm.

“Atul Uncle was cracking jokes, and in the flow he asked me about you and Yash, and the thing slipped out of my tongue. Sorry bhai.”, Deepak laments.

“Your tongue is slipping a lot nowadays. Laila don’t leave his hand.”, says Aarav. The boy leaves the hand.

“Aarav how many times will I tell you not to call me by that name.”, revolts the student.

“Bro your name is big. And what a name it is, Arun Lela Singh. Why to say such a long name, rather we’ll just call you Laila!”, says Aarav as both him and Deepak start laughing.

“Come on yaar!”, says a frustrated Arun, not seriously though.

Deepak slips out of the hold. But then stares at Arun for few seconds. But then he starts singing madly.

“Laila O Laila... Kaisi Tu Laila... Har Koi Chaahe Tujhse... Milna Akela!”, Deepak goes wild.

“Disgusting creatures, I shouldn’t have come here!”, says Arun as he storms out of there wailing.

Aarav and Deepak laugh and high five each other hysterically. But then Deepak's eyes catches something. This agitates him a bit.

“Aarav, for a moment, can’t this girl be a bit serious. She is studying here too!”, Deepak says.

He sees Sarika sitting on a bench and studying.

“She likes to stay in books and digests all day. If she prefers it, then we can’t say anything.”, says Aarav.

“No. She needs to be told. She has to indulge with us in this trip.”, says Deepak.

And saying this, Deepak walks upto Sarika.

“Aree Deepak! No don’t go! Don’t bother her! Well, you are not going to listen anyways.”, Aarav says.

Deepak sits on the bench, keeping the distance. Sarika stills moves away a bit.

“Hi.”, Deepak greets humorously.

“Hello.”, Sarika replies awkwardly.

“Just asking out of curiosity, how do you study so much? Don’t you think this way too much? Hehe..”, Deepak asks notoriously.

“Too much? How much was your CGPA last semester? Can you say if you don’t mind?”, asks Sarika.

“Umm.. WE DON’T DO THAT HERE! My point is, you must have fun in this trip. Skip your studies for some time, and enjoy at least with your close friends. Aasna, where is she?”, asks Deepak.

“She is walking around, she went somewhere from that clearing.”, says Sarika.

“Oh... let’s bring her so that you can have some time to enjoy here. Talk to her, play some games like rocks... papers... scissors, or listen to music, or something which makes us feel you are with us.”, says

Deepak.

He is serious.

“I can’t help. I just like to be this way. You see, no one wants me to stay like this. Aasna and maybe Aarav are the only people who accept this introvert me, this is who I am. I can’t change.”, says Sarika.

Deepak smiles a bit.

“You know Sarika who are the most introverted people in the world.”, asks Deepak.

“Who?”, asks Sarika.

“Men in the age group of 18 to 26. These guys are directionless. They mostly have no idea what they are doing in their lives. They are brought up in a way to always aim of becoming something big in life, but in the

process they forget, how to live that life. Some don't care, they party all day, go on long drives with friends and date girls. The ones who care, they care because they must be getting dosed by the elders at home, or have failed in something, let's say love, and they care but aren't confident if they will succeed again. That's why they don't share their problems with anyone, neither parents nor friends. One reason is, they don't want to look weak in the eyes of the masses, and the second is, they are so weak, that they don't get a chance to speak out.", says Deepak deeply.

"Hmm... fair enough.", says Sarika.

"Just take my example. I always feel like I am not the son my parents wanted me to be like... like you, great in studies, obedient, well behaved. I always think, I don't have more friends like Aarav, who believe in me no matter what happens. Maybe it's my fault, in order to keep the real terrible version of me away from their eyes, I just get so ridiculously jolly at times, it might annoy or distance some people away from me. But to be honest, I have to just accept it. If this what I have to be like, I will be. Many people like me this way, and the most important thing is, I love myself this way. I love the clumsy me, I will remain like this. Just like that, maybe you need to be the way that makes you genuinely admire yourself. You don't trust many people, but believe me Sarika, there are amazing people out there. I surround myself with those gems, those boys who live happily no matter how messed up their lives are, those girls who are not afraid to be themselves and allow people to be a part of their lives. Once you start accepting the people around you, the ones who are there with you daily, believe me, you will start loving everything.", says Deepak.

This affected Sarika a lot. Nobody ever said this to her before. She doesn't say anything but smiles, looks at Deepak and nods.

"I am not saying to change yourself. Everyone likes you the way you are, those who don't, to hell with them. I have no problem with you, I just act stupid because of your introverted nature sometimes, just apologize me whenever I do that. All I want is, you to believe in me and everyone. Perhaps you do believe in us, maybe that's why you came here. But why not, make these guys and girls, feel the same way about you, even they start accepting you the way you are.", says Deepak.

"I am speechless. I never thought I will hear these words from you, please don't mind it. I want to try my best, but it just doesn't happen.", says Sarika.

"Keep those books on bench and come with me.", says Deepak.

Sarika agrees and he takes her to Nitya who is gossiping with some of her female friends.

"Hey Nitya, give her some company. Chhidana nahi warna koni bajegi... Aasna ki.", Deepak commands.

"What will you do goof? Leave him Sarika, join us. We are discussing something really interesting. You will love it!", says Nitya.

"Thank you. What is it about?", Sarika asks.

"Just sit down here first. Come on!", says Nitya excitedly.

Deepak leaves satisfied. But then he looks around for Aarav, and doesn't find him.

"He was just here? Kahan gaya yeh ladka? Both the hero and the heroine are gone! Wah! Hero ko dhundte hai.", says Deepak.

Aarav is, obviously, lurking around in the place he loves. He left a mark last time to that spot. He found it and the moment he starts walking in, he hears a girl singing.

Maangi thi... duaayein jo..

Unka hi asar hai... hum saath hai.

Naa yahan, dikhava hai...

Naa yahan, duniyavi jazbaat hai!

Aasna is sitting under the **same tree** she went to hide while playing hide and seek, and singing the song that brought these two together again when they grew up. Aarav couldn't believe the coincidence, he now remembers everything about the first trip. Aasna noticed Aarav seeing her from a distance. She is surprised.

"Your voice is melodious. Wow.", says Aarav.

"Not that good. But still thank you. When did you come?", says Aasna.

"Just now, stopped after listening to you singing my favourite song", says Aarav.

“Our favourite song. Don’t forget. And you have brought us to a place where the network is slower than a snail, so singing it on my own.”, says Aasna, berating Aarav a bit.

Uhm... I am extremely sorry.”, Aarav says.

“Aarav, how many times will you ask for apologies to me?”, asks Aasna, with a humorous intent.

“Ah, it’s like, asking for apologies are sweet when you... love someone?”, says Aarav, a bit carefully when he came to the “love” part.

Aasna just smiles and nods her head, unable to digest the admirable charm of Aarav.

“I hope you remember this place right?”, says Aarav.

“Absolutely I do. We had so much fun that day, how can I forget!”, says Aasna.

“Yes. I hope I didn’t break your rhythm. You were singing so nicely.”, says Aarav.

“No Aarav. I was just murmuring the song as I was looking down at the stream of river.”, says Aasna.

“Only you can sing that fluently when murmuring.”, says Aarav.

Aasna smiles and looks at him. Aarav smiles too but looks down, getting shy.

“What were you seeing though?”, asks Aarav, as he sits down.

“Do you see that small village right there in the middle of the river, I wonder how the people are living there. I can see some settlements. It looks so peaceful.”, says Aasna.

Aarav looked up at the sky and started screaming inside his heart out of joy. This is exactly how him and Aasna started talking to each other fifteen years ago. Life has come full circle to that moment yet again. This is the moment he has been waiting for so long. This is truly magical. Deepak has shown a vulnerable side of his to Sarika to make her realize a very important thing about her. This has strengthened their bond. The tale of Aarav of Aasna has begin, but will that one incident between their parents, something Atul hasn’t apologized Garima for, affect this new chapter in their children’s lives?

Aarav is seated below an adjacent tree, facing Aasna, who is sitting under her tree, facing the other side of the mountains.

“Maybe they are gifted with everything they need. Some day I have to visit that village. I have been given a project, so for the fieldwork I will go there.”, says Aarav.

“What’s the project topic?”, asks Aasna.

“The Cultural Life of Satpura Village.”, answers Aarav.

“Oh wow. Looks interesting. I would love to see your report.”, says Aasna.

“My pleasure. I am looking forward to complete this before the year ends. Let’s see how it goes.”, says Aarav.

“It will go smooth and you will definitely end with up great results.”, encourages Aasna.

“How incredibly things have changed in last four months. You weren’t believing in me a bit earlier. Now, you are trying to encourage me, make me believe in myself.”, Aarav says.

“I was surely at fault. But things have to happen when it should.”, Aasna answers.

“True, I believe we both had a misunderstanding, but we cleared that rift between us at the right time.”, says Aarav.

“I can never realize what burden you got rid of after that conversation at the fair, but I was also let free off something too.”, says Aasna.

“To me, there was a doubt but never did it dawn upon me that I am in this peculiar position of not being able to convey my feelings to you. You wanted to keep the distance, I happily kept it.”, says Aarav.

“Didn’t you ever feel to let your feelings out to me, let it out your heart, try to woo me like other boys, and go... on a physical war with Yash?”, asks Aasna as he laughs a bit after asking.

“Haha! That would have been terrible. But to be honest I am just not like that, I will never force someone to be a close companion of me

just because I like that person. And here I am just talking about friendship, when it comes love, I truly believe, if you love someone truly, leave your beloved free, let them be independent. Your love will definitely reach them.”, says Aarav.

“Do you feel now that your love has reached me?”, asks Aasna.

“Not yet. I could do a lot more. I always felt that I must do more to let you know how much I love you, yes I always wanted to reach out to you, but I had to hold myself back.”, says Aarav.

“I know I was a bit reluctant, and the once you'd say anything like *hey Aasna I like you... no I love you and I think we should talk more* or stuff I would have been really disappointed, but you could have come up with some way, right? Why it didn't happen?”, says Aasna.

“I respect you a bit more than other girls, maybe that's why... But I was at fault for sure.”, clarifies Aarav.

“You respect me so much, that you waited for me to come and talk to you?”, asks Aasna.

“Yes... I did. I will wait for as long as you keep me waiting, days, months, years, decades, lives... no matter what.”, says Aarav.

“Why?”, asks Aasna subtly.

“It's because, a love without patience, isn't love, it's a need. I will be patient, suffer the wrath of waiting as long as I have to, and keep waiting for you to respond.”, says Aarav.

“Did you suffer all this time waiting for me to reply to your love?”, says Aasna, now sounding a bit eager.

“If I had to I would have. But love is such a feeling, it makes everything beautiful for you. I never felt I was struggling. The pain received also felt soothing. The void felt aesthetic. I never repented for anything.”, says Aarav.

“At the end of the day, you were in pain. How did you live with it? Wasn't it hurting you, the one loving you doesn't love you back?”, asks Aasna.

Aarav, who was smiling all this time answering to Aasna's unending questions, nods and let's her know he never felt hurt by the reality of his love story.

“How is it possible? Like 3 years, keeping your feelings to yourself, it must have affected you.”, says Aasna.

“It did, but positively. It helped me. Seeing you happy and content with your life from the distance, was a blissful feeling.”, Aarav answers.

“What about you? Were you happy? You didn’t looked pleased by my ignorance. That day when you asked me why did feel awkward around you, I could see that unsettled mind. Were you upset, because of me?”, Aasna asks.

“I wasn’t upset because of you Aasna, I was upset because of our situation. I can’t talk to you, you didn’t want to talk to me. But after all it was your decision, and I respect it. Love never demands to be loved. So it never hurt me, but it was a bit unsettling for sure. After all, I had a lot of things to tell you, I wasn’t able to, that’s why it felt a bit uneasy.”, says Aarav.

“Well... now you have got the time, the space to say it. Please, let it come out of your heart. You shouldn’t keep it in for that long.”, says Aasna.

Aarav takes a deep breath.

“When I saw you for the first time, I didn’t feel this way. We were kids then, but one thing that really made me connected to you was your sheer curiosity for everything. I have never seen someone who wanted to explore things, and wanted to know so much like you Aasna. When I met you again after years, I will admit, I felt I just saw the most beautiful girl in all of this universe. I had never, or will ever see a girl as much prettier as you are. But what made me fall for you was again, I felt like, I want to help you in exploring this world, this little world we live in. I also felt, I wanted to know you. I wanted to explore what those eyes wanted to see. Those eyes, always was eager to know something. You felt so precious for being like that. Months passed by, I couldn’t keep my heart waiting for doing something for you. You have this nature of having your own circle of people. I didn’t want you to come out of it, but wanted to be the one you can trust the most. I have never wanted to pull out so much efforts for someone. I knew you were happy, but I wanted to make you happier. I wanted you to know and make you feel like you are the best in the world. I was ready to do anything for you. I didn’t need anything in return. Seeing you

extremely overjoyed, to see that vivid and beautiful smile on your face, was my wish. All the motivation, the newly born passion, was taken away from me, in a single snap. Not when I knew you were in relationship with Yash, but when I knew, you knew what I wanted, and you wanted to stay away from this. It was fine for me. It's understood you are in relationship, you don't want someone else to love you. But when Yash started calling me and say things to me like I had no right to love not just you but anyone, I realized, you didn't trust me. This broke me. In an instant, from feeling like the most encouraged lover of all, to most vulnerable of them all, I couldn't bear it. I wanted to make you happy, but eventually everything played out a way and I became someone, who pushed you into the most hideous place you could have been. I felt like a culprit. But that notion was certainly gone, when I saw you were happy as ever. By the time I realized you never had problem with me. But still, you weren't happy with what transpired. So now as I am your friend, I will do anything to make you feel beatific. I will do anything in my power to correct my mistakes. I will try to give you a friendship you will remember forever. In my love, I will do everything responsibly. And all of that, just to see you smiling always whenever you are around me. I always prayed God if I can't do it, He will keep you in the seventh heaven. But now... as long as I am there for you, I will try to be the reason of some amount of happiness you must have in your life. I promise you, I will never ever make you feel daunted of anything. I am again really sorry for making you feel that way the first time, not anymore Aasna, not anymore. I will keep loving you this way.", Aarav completes his speech.

Aasna has no words left to say. She is just looking at Aarav, feeling absolutely blissed. She is feeling how lucky she is to be loved like this by someone. She almost had tears of satisfaction, but she didn't let it fall down her eyes. She is smiling, the smile Aarav can feel is the happiest she has ever smiled before. His soul is feeling relieved right now, he wants to cry out too, but controls his emotions rightfully and gives back a pleased smile.

"That was all I had kept in my heart for you. The constant wish of making you happy, for no reason, made me love you.", says Aarav.

"The way you love me, you deserved to be loved back. But...", Aasna replies.

“No no no! Don’t go there. Don’t stress yourself. Let’s not worry about it. I am blessed to have your trust, and have this amazing bond which clicks so well as friends. Love is just a feeling of affection and care, it doesn’t need to be that Bollywood type of romantic saga all the time. Sometimes it should be, but most of the times, it’s just the better and stronger version of friendship between a boy and a girl, and nowadays it’s between a boy and another boy and a girl and another girl, which I am absolutely fine with. So let’s just stick to the initial version of friendship, which is filled with fun and joy, a youthful, energetic relation of two people, that’s what we need Aasna.”, says Aarav.

“This is amazing. I can’t believe it. You are so different.”, says Aasna.

“Nah. There are many boys and girls like me. I am just a bit better may be.”, says Aarav, a bit notoriously.

“Hmm... better. Well let’s test your love then.”, says Aasna.

“Oh no.”, Aarav reacts.

“What will you do to make me happy, like right now?”, challenges Aasna.

“Umm... yes! Let’s do this.. Let’s go to the village.”, answers Aarav.

“Which village?”, asks Aasna a bit staggered.

“That village right there, you were looking at. Let’s go there.”, Aarav says.

“Are you serious!? How will we cross the river?”, Aasna asks, as she stands up.

“There is boat facilities which will help us to reach there, it costs some money, which I will pay. Let’s go!”, Aarav replies.

“We can’t leave the camp Aarav.”, says Aasna a bit worried.

“Don’t worry, we won’t tell them, let’s leave from here itself. Down there network will work, getting the boat and a guide for the village won’t be a problem. Let’s not waste the time!”, says Aarav.

“But Aarav how will...”, Aasna asks again.

“Stop asking the questions let’s go! Believe in me, it will be thrilling!”, Aarav says, as he gets his hands up, offering it to Aasna.

Aasna thinks a bit, and finally holds it. Both rush down the hill very excited.

Aarav has finally confessed it all to Aasna! This is all he wanted to do as he wanted to bring Aasna to that place back where they met for the first time. Aasna has now genuine connection with Aarav, a bond of trust so strong, that cannot be broken. Aarav has promised Aasna he won't disappoint her anymore, and to give her some moments of sheer pleasure, he is doing something which might just end up a bit problematic for the people who have come with them. But who cares! The love Aarav kept closed in his heart is now speaking volumes and doing anything it wants to get back it's due by the beloved Aasna! Aasna too wants give something back, this is what's happening here! Lets join them in this fun chapter of their love!

Two boatmen, one named Raghu and other named Mohan, grab some tobacco to chew. They start crushing it on their palms to put it in the mouth. They are sitting near their boats at the riverside.

“Aree usko phenkiye! What do you get by consuming those life threatening products? Have this prasad from the Mandir of Brijnandan (Lord Krishna).”, says a well dressed man in his early 30s with a light MP accent.

“Oh hoo! Dijiye dijiye!”, says Raghu, as he throws his tobacco down and wipes his hands, takes the prasad in his hands.

“Jai Shri Krishna!”, says Mohan before receiving the prasad.

“Have any people come today?”, asks the man.

“No brother. Not a single soul. Government officers won’t come every day.”, says Mohan.

“I think sometimes, why do we have these jobs? ₹300 a month, for doing nothing.”, says Raghu.

“The people of Satpura are proud of you both for bringing people from cities which helps the village to get flourished and develop. Be grateful for what you are doing for the villagers. Thank Brijesh ji for giving you this opportunity to serve the well wishers of our village.”, says the man.’

Meanwhile, Aarav and Aasna come down the hills to the riverside. They are a little exhausted.

“Bhai ji, these officers are looking too young. Isn’t it?”, asks Raghu.

“Hmm, I don’t think they are officers. Let’s go and talk with the young birds.”, says the man.

That man walks up to Aarav and Aasna. Aarav is panting holding his knees and Aasna just sat down for some fresh air.

“Go and fetch some water for me.”, orders Aasna.

“That river water? So you want to drink that contaminated water? Fine!”, says Aarav as he goes to the side of the river with his right shoe in his hand.

“Don’t tell me you are going to bring it in your shoes! Wait, you rogue!”, revolts Aasna, humorously.

“Aree beta waapis aa jaayo! Iss nadi ka paani 120% shuddh hai, hum aapko daawa dete hai! Lo beti, peelo.”, says the man as he arrives with a bucket full of river water and two steel glasses.

“Thank you Bhaiya. Hmm... this water is really good!”, says Aasna after drinking the water.

“What kind of magic is this? How is this river water so clean?”, asks Aarav curiously as he drinks the water.

“As these mountain ranges come under this state's one of many heritage sites, the state takes full responsibility to keep this river clean. But yes, never drink that water directly from the current, you might hurt or consume the little living creatures and bacteria in the river. So better boil it first and drink it. This is the boiled river water, take it as much as you want.”, explains the man to the kids.

“This is so good. I love when people come together to help keep our nature safe and beautiful as it always should be.”, says Aasna.

“Well, what makes you both come here? Just a stroll through this riverside? Go ahead.”, says the man.

“Actually, we want to visit the village. Can we?”, asks Aarav.

The man looks behind at his boatmen. The boatmen smiled and turned around.

“I come from the same village, myself Jajati Ramchandra, aka Ramchand. Even though belonging from a backward community, I was privileged to get the opportunity to study and become the advisor of the Satpura village. My vision is the vision of the BDO of this area, who is looking after my village. I also become a guide for the government officers who come here occasionally to examine this village.”, says Ramchand.

Aarav and Aasna understood that their chances are pretty low.

"I am Aarav Verma. She is Aasna Sharma. We are from the Raja Shankar Shah College. The institution has brought many students, including us, for a three day trip.", Aarav answers

"That's a semi-government college. I think you must have your camps at the picnic spots of the mountain range, so what's your job in the village?", asks Ramchand.

Aasna has believed they aren't going to the village.

"Commoners are not allowed, let's go Aarav.", whispers Aasna.

"Actually I have been given a project and my research area is this village. I have reviewed the literature, now what I need is responses to my questionnaire from actual respondents, that is the people of the Satpura Village.", Aarav explains.

"I understand. But that's your personal fieldwork. It's does not relate with any government research project. We can't allow commoners in beta.", says Ramchand.

Aasna nodded her head and started moving back. Suddenly Aarav held her hands tight. She looked at him, he looked at her. Aarav nods his head and gives her the hope to stay. Ramchand noticed that and had a dazed look on his face.

"Ramchand bhaiya, you look to be a generous man. With that tilak on your head, Rudraaksh in your necklace, sacred threads and rings adorning your hands and fingers, you look like actual Ramchandra to me. What you are doing for your village must be very appreciated. I am from a privileged family, I have got everything I have wanted since a young age. But knowing about the people who haven't been gifted the best of a life by destiny, and to know how they make it on a daily basis, with people like you representing them at big level and helping their basic needs be fulfilled, this story of you and your fellow villagers looks very inspiring to me. Please give this privilege to me, a nobody who wants his tasks to be completed by time, and this courageous woman, who wants to help her curiousness to gain the knowledge of this beautiful village. Please let us be a small part of this growing little beauty.", Aarav pleads in the humblest way possible.

Ramchand just couldn't believe. Aarav joined his hands at this moment, and Ramchand held it immediately and speak.

“Aree beta, aisa mat karo. Seeing the Maryaada Purshottam himself in this mere Brij bhakt is something I can’t accept because it’s bigger than my existence. I really don’t know how to respond to this.”, says Ramchand, very perplexed.

“We don’t have anything to take away from here. All we have is this mind, which would like to capture some of the best memories from your home. For that, we came all the way down from the hills. But I understand you can’t break the norms. We will go back bhaiya. Thank you for the earthly fresh water. Aarav, we must respect his decision. Let’s leave.”, says Aasna.

Aarav wasn’t happy. He joined his hands again, this time greeting Ramchand, Raghu and Mohan.

“Sorry for disrupting your daily routine. It was good meeting you bhaiya. You do your job with full dignity. We should definitely respect that. Thank you for the hospitality.”, says Aarav.

Aarav and Aasna start walking back. Aasna pats Aarav's shoulder. Aarav kept looking down and walked.

Ramchand wasn’t feeling good about this.

“Aarav beta! Aasna beti!... itni dur se aaye ho, aise khaali haath nahi jaane denge. Aa jaayiye. Karaate hai ser humare Satpura gaaon ka. Naiyaa nikaalo Mohan babu. Safar thoda lamba hoga, ye paani ka baalti le chaliye saath main Raghu bhaiya. Aayiye aap dono.”, says Ramchand.

To their utter delight, Aarav and Aasna walk back towards the boats. As the sail begins, Aasna gets busy seeing the serene river flowing below the boat around here. She is mesmerized with the striking beauty of the nature around her. Aarav, he doesn’t need to do the same, he is ecstatically watching his ever beautiful girl, who is in love with this place. Ramchand keeps looking at both of them.

With a vivid smile on his face, he thinks to himself... *“I made my mind to let these two sail with me to the village, not when they were going back, but when this boy held his girl's hand tightly when she lost hopes on getting her wish fulfilled. Brijesh was right, love is greatest feeling in this universe. It makes you do the impossible. My young man, your immense love for her is the reason why I am allowing you both to go to my village.*

Keep loving her, Lord Krishna will definitely keep you both together for a long time.”

Let's see what these two experience in the village which, just might be the place, where their love really meets each other's soul.

Twenty years ago...

“I don’t want to fight this case. It’s a loss for sure!”, says Atul.

Atul, Vedika, Tanuja and Varun are in Atul's cabin.

“They are putting a lot of faith on you. Can’t just deny it Atul.”, says Tanuja.

“Bhabhi I understand but...”, says Atul but he is stopped.

“Aisa kya hai jo tu nahi kar sakta? You are on a winning streak, eight straight wins. This is just another...”, says Varun a bit adamantly.

“NO VARUN BHAIYA! I can’t betray the law! This man has played with the lives of thousands of people! A crime way bigger than some loot or a single homicide. I can’t fight for scoundrels like Aniket!”, says Atul agitated.

Vedika keeps her hand on Atul's shoulder from behind.

“I know this is not right. But please Atul, try to understand. This is your job.”, says Vedika.

“Vedika, my job is about being righteous, truthful to the people. Law is the last page of the chapter, the name of that chapter is justice. When police can’t, the system can’t, law gives the final justice. And if law

fails in providing that too, then what’s the point of doing this?”, says Atul.

No one speaks back because they feel Atul is right.

“Atul, may I say something?”, asks Gaurav.

He enters the room with a serious demeanour.

“Please Gaurav. Have a seat.”, says Atul.

“I heard it, and I agree with you. This case is going to harm your tenure. There might be some truth that Aniket isn’t directly responsible for this, but he is still a culprit. But my wife, she has a hope, even if it is wrong. Her hope, that is very strong, believes you

will do your given task and complete it successfully. Even Krishna says, nothing is more important than your Karma. Without thinking about the result, you must do your task. Here, you are in the place of the Lord himself. You know the result, just like he knew what will be the outcome of the war of Mahabharata. But he kept his word and let the epic war to establish Dharma happen. No one is taking this case on Aniket's defense. If no one does, maybe Aniket will get a lenient sentence, which he does not deserve. You take this, you lose this, he is behind the bars. Or you might even win this case too. It's a win-win situation for you my friend.", says Gaurav briefly.

"Yes Atul, go ahead with this case. This is your Karma.", says Vedika.

Atul breathes out heavily, nods his head and reluctantly accepts the offer.

"Alright. Gaurav, I need to meet Aniket. Let's meet him tomorrow.", says Atul.

"Sure. I will be there to pick you up.", says Gaurav.

"See, when you have unanswerable questions, turn towards the Lord of the Universe, Krishna. He will erase your questions!", Tanuja whispers to her husband.

Varun doesn't reply, just smirks and nods with a slight disappointment. He isn't a religious man.

Present day....

Aarav and Aasna are welcomed by the villagers with open hands. Aarav introduces himself to the important men in the village through Ramchand. Aasna indulges with the kids and their mothers right away.

"This might look like paint, but most of the design and patterns on the walls are made of thin strikes of mud. Just some of it is paint.", says a villager as he shows a wall painting to Aarav.

"How is this possible? Mud being of so many vibrant colours?", asked Aarav amazed.

"The soil. The soil naturally can be of light brown, red, yellow, green, in some cases blue too! We extract that soil, mix it with water, and

brush it on walls applying these traditional designs.”, Ramchand explains

“Beautiful! Simple yet extraordinary!”, says Aarav.

Ramchand leaves Aarav for some time with the male villagers and walks towards Aasna.

“This is the most notorious one. Ramu idhar aa! Haan... aaya haath main (picks up the child). Pareshaan toh nahi kar rahe Behen ko? Hmm... jaa khel.”, says Ramchand.

“Didi Didi, yeh wala maine banaya!”, says a kid, as she gives clay boat made out of sand and water.

“Kitna pyaara hai yeh! Isme aap mere shehar ghumne aayo.”, says Aasna affectionately.

“This is what these kids do most of the day. The elder boys and girls go to government schools nearby the mountain range. Education for generation below me is necessary.”, says Ramchand.

“I mean, what these kids are doing is also a kind of education. Making these clay models, indulging in the cultural activities of the village. First learn about your roots!”, says Aasna.

“Definitely... cultural... wait a second. Radhika Chachi... when will the festivities begin?”, asks Ramchand to a woman sitting beside Aasna.

“In few moments beta.”, replies the woman.

“What is it about?”, asks Aasna.

“Today, on the day of Krishna Ashtami every month, the people of Satpura village have a festivity commemorating all forms of Lord Krishna. It happens in such a pattern, that in the month of Janmashtami, we remember to pray and celebrate the actual form of Krishna, the flute player, the cowherd you worship in your home. This month is dedicated to *Hayasirsa*, one of the forms of Lord Krishna. According to a legend, our ancestors originally come from the *Bhadrasva-varsha*, the land belonging to *Bhadrasva*, the son of *Dharmaraja*. Today it would be the modern day Central East Asia, around Western China and South Mongolia. *Bhadrasva* worshipped *Hayasirsa*, so we as his descendants, worship this form of Krishna before

the *Sanatan Nav Varsh* arrives.”, says Ramchand, explaining the spiritual belief of his village.

“Absolutely mesmerizing to hear! My father would loved to meet these people. He is a believer of Vaishnav culture, a very religious man.”, says Aasna.

“Aap hi bata dena apne pitaji ko, we can’t bring anymore commoners here! Just kidding.”, says Ramchand

“No you are absolutely right. This is a sacred land. Not everyone should be allowed to visit here.”, says Aasna.

“Ramchand, the preparations are done. Aasna beti, join us in our prayers. And then we will sing and dance too!”, says a woman.

“Alright. Let’s go Aasna.”, says Ramchand.

“Sure. My pleasure... but where’s Aarav?”, asks Aasna.

“Oh yes. Forgot about the lad in our conversation.”, says Ramchand.

“He must be wandering somewhere again.”, says Aasna.

And she was right. This man is wandering in the wilderness of the village. Without anyone’s knowledge, he has sneaked behind the trees and vegetation. Aarav has decided though he won’t go too much into the forest. But as he walks in a few metres, he heard something.

Clop-Clop... Clop-Clop... Clop-Clop...

“What’s that sound?”, says Aarav as the sound gets closer.

And to his right, from the depths of the jungle... came out... a horse, yes a “HORSE”. It’s mustard brown in colour, pale brown hairs on it. The horse looked absolutely stunning! It quietly stops in front of Aarav, sniffs a few times and stands there, moving his head a little.

“For the love of God, what’s this horse doing in the forest? Maybe... it belongs to a villager! Oh no, I must take it back to the village.”, says Aarav slowly.

He gets near to the horse, it smell his hands, and when Aarav realizes the horse is fine, he speaks softly.

“Hello friend. How did you end up here? You’re a gorgeous looking horse man! May I pet you a bit?”, says Aarav.

Aarav gently pets the horse on its neck and shoulder. The horse didn't show any sign of danger. A horse does a bit loud "Neigh!" here, which wasn't any troublesome. Aarav found the confidence.

"Fine I am going to take you to the village! You have bridle and a seat attached on your face and back. Definitely you have run away from your owner. I'll let you walk. Let's go buddy.", says Aarav.

The horse didn't move. Aarav couldn't understand why. He tried to pat it and move... but all he got was constant whinny sounds by the horse, Aarav came to a conclusion, he has to sit on it.

"The last time I sat on a horse was in Katra when I visited the Vaishno Devi Mandir. It was long time back. Can I pull it this time? Let's see...", says Aarav.

Aarav keeps his left foot firmly onto the stirrup, grabs the saddle gently, and sits on the back of the horse. The horse started walking towards the village on its own. Aarav didn't had to direct him.

"Well, looks like it's definitely a villager's pet. This feels cool man.", says Aarav.

Back in the village, everyone's has done the puja. Aasna offered some flowers, and prayed Lord *Hayasirsa* for the well being of the villagers. It was 4 feet long idol of the deity. The pandit did the necessary rituals. It's time for the festivities and bhojan.

"Aarav still hasn't come yet! Where has this boy gone?", says Aasna a bit agitated.

"This is risky. How can he leave the village area like this with...", says Ramchand, but he stops.

He sees Aarav entering into the village through a clearing. And not only Ramchand, all of the villagers are staring towards Aarav with absolute shock. All of them look staggered by the sight. It seems they can't believe what they are seeing.

"Well, I am back! I was just a strolling a bit in the wilderness, found this horse in the forest. It was a bit strange at first, but this friend is very good. If anyone lost their precious pet, here it is. It walked itself into the village, I just took the ride.", says Aarav to the villagers.

“All of that is fine, but Aarav, could you care to watch the people a bit closely?”, Aasna says.

The stunned faces of the villagers confused her. Aarav, after looking at them realized this was serious. He gets off the horse and stands perplexed.

“Beta, are you the second coming himself? How is this possible?”, asks a villager.

“What, no! Second coming me... what are you talking about sir?”, asks Aarav.

“Either you are someone special, or... or... OUR GOD JUST TOOK THE DESCENT TO OUR LAND!!! THE LORD IS HERE!!!”, a woman wails ecstatically.

The whole village bows down to... the horse! Even Ramchand joined his hands with a glad smile and an unbelievable look in his eyes. Aarav is absolutely confused at this point! But then he looks at the idol of the deity being worshiped, it's the horse-headed human, physical embodiment and version of Lord Krishna, *Hayasirsa*.

“Aarav, you have done the unthinkable. No one in this land owns a horse. So seeing one for the first time in the village, they believe you accompanied, the Almighty himself.”, says Ramchand.

Aarav is dumbstruck. Aasna didn't feel this right, she slowly walks towards the horse, pets it's back and speaks.

“Everyone, please listen. I understand, you all have your strong, beautiful faith in what you perceive something or someone spiritually. But is it right, to attach this innocent animal, who has lost its way, and has somehow ended up in the wilderness and in this village now, to your beliefs? Let this horse, feel like that it has entered into a family, and all of you will take care of it. It's just my request, to see it as a member of your own, and not someone out of this world.”, Aasna pleads to everyone.

The villagers seem to understand her. Ramchand's effort to help this village grow has certainly affected their minds too.

“But beti, isn't it a coincidence, that this beautiful creature, had to be in our village, on this day, in this occasion, with all of us? How can we

not believe, it's not a special sign, someone so miraculous, that it has lighted all of us up with it's presence!", says an elderly woman.

"Maa ji, miracles are not re...", says Aasna, but she was interrupted.

"Aasna, miracles... are real. Coincidences, are a real thing. Being blessed in any way, is true. Whether it's our friendship, or this honourable animal, who has joined us in this occasion.(Turns towards the horse) I will call you Sirsa from today, and I welcome you, into the festival, my divine friend.", says Aarav, as he joins his hands to greet the horse.

With him, all the villagers join their hand. Ramchand nods his head out of disbelief and smiling out of wholesome satisfaction. Aasna, just smiled and couldn't believe this. How can Aarav win so many hearts and minds! He is indeed special. Aarav takes the bridle and walks Sirsa to the idol of *Hayasirsa*. Aarav prays the Lord, and takes the blessings by touching the feet of the idol, breaks the bananas which was offered as prasad to the idol, and gave it to Sirsa, the horse relishes it. Everyone watches this sight blissfully.

"Folks, Aasna is right, this horse may not be a deity, our Sirsa is a simple yet a beautiful horse, who may now become a special member of this family. This village is the new home of this horse. Every year, on this day, not only Lord *Hayasirsa* will be worshipped, but the arrival of this new member will also be celebrated. The happiness, the togetherness, this horse has brought in all of you, I can't believe my eyes. This is beautiful. That's why, I request you all to celebrate the presence of our respected Sirsa, on this day every year from now on.", says Aarav.

"Thik hai beta, we accept your proposal. This horse, is truly a blessing to us. Ae Sirsa, tu abse Satpura ki raunak hai!", says an elderly man of the village.

"**RAADHE RAADHE!!!!**", Ramchand chants loudly, as the singing and dancing begins!

Everyone goes into absolute sense of exuberance! The villagers join hands and starts dancing to their folk songs dedicated to the Almighty. The young men are playing the drums and hornpipes to elate the joyous

mood of the villagers. Aarav joined right away into the celebration. Aasna, though a bit reluctant, joins the villagers after Aarav's one, just one request. And it was again, just an offer by hand. Aasna, who was hesitating to talk to Aarav months ago, is now ready to hold his hands and enjoy every bit of life and their friendship. She has accepted Aarav, she has understood no one can love her like him. She will now never make him regret his feelings. The aura of the place they are in right now has brought them more close, closer than ever. In between the frolicking of villagers, Aarav looks at the ever joyful Aasna, and feels the world has brought it all together for him. Aasna, realizes it, and turns around to look into his eyes. Aarav was thinking a lot of things, but Aasna, in a glimpse of moments, hugs Aarav happily. Aarav couldn't believe it, but embraces it.

This is magic right here! What a saga of love! JAI SHRI KRISHNA!

This was the best day of my life.”, says Aasna.

“I am glad, for me too. I can’t believe what we just witnessed.”, says Aarav.

Both have returned to the riverside with Ramchand.

“This is what Satpura is all about. This is all I have seen growing up. I do believe you, Aarav, you will portray my homeland the best way possible in your report. Aasna, I hope your curiosity has been served well.”, says Ramchand.

“The hospitality, the care and affection we received from the villagers is truly appreciable and I will never forget it Ramchand bhaiya.”, says Aasna.

“If you believe in me, I promise I will give my best to live up to those expectations. I will do whatever it takes. This place, is absolutely astounding. The people here are loving and so much down to earth. We felt like a family. This is a family, that’s going to remain forever in my heart. Thank you bhaiya... for all these memories.”, says Aarav.

“It’s good to hear you both had a wonderful time. Aarav, today you brought the happiest faces out of my people. Aasna, your presence felt really important. You both have truly blessed my home. I really want to thank you both with a respectful heart. I am grateful.”, says Ramchand, as he joins his hands and thanks the kids.

“Don’t do this bhaiya! You are elder than us. And our parents have taught us no matter what, respect your elders. You’re a big brother, can I hug you? That’s the best way to thank you.”, says Aasna.

Ramchand smiles, but first ask Aarav by gestures if he is okay with that. Aarav quickly gives a thumbs up.

Ramchand and Aasna hug affectionately.

Aarav goes ahead and hugs Ramchand. This was a formal hug.

“How long have you both been together?”, asks Ramchand subtly.

“Uh.. since this morning? Yeah... that’s the answer I can give you right now.”, answers Aarav slowly.

“Is this one sided!”, asks Ramchand quietly.

“Yes. It’s good this way.”, says Aarav.

“Nope! Finish the story! Sirsa ki saugandh hai tumhe!”, revolts Ramchand subtly.

“Iss dharam sankat main mat daalo bhaiya.”, answers Aarav.

Both have a good laugh and release from hugging each other. Aasna wonders why was that hug so long.

“How much the whole visit...”, asks Aarav as he reached his pocket for the wallet.

“Aree nahi! You both will be the most special guests to ever visit Satpura for the rest of our lives. No amount of money can take over the happiness you both have blessed us with.”, says Ramchand.

“Don’t say like that bhaiya. We are just two young individuals who wanted to visit this beautiful place. It’s you all, not us. You and your people blessed us. Thank you so much!”, says Aasna.

“If God wants, we will be back some day. Next time... Just maybe as government officials.”, says Aarav humorously.

“Haha... this village has a postman coming here to send government notice. Feel open to write letters to us. I will be there to reply, always.”, says Ramchand.

“Your first letter will be a copy of his report then!”, says Aasna excitedly.

“Aasna, it’s my college project, not a news article.”, says Aarav humbly. Aasna and Ramchand respond with chuckles.

“You can summarize what you will write in your report and post it to Ramchand bhaiya!”, suggests Aasna.

“Fine, you would be doing it anyways. Ramchand bhaiya, this is not the final, but a goodbye hug.”, says Aarav as he hugs Ramchand again.

“Take care champ. Would love to hear from you again.”, says Ramchand.

“Bhaiya, I will miss you! Take care... wishing great fortunes for your villagers.”, says Aasna.

“Same to you Aasna. May Krishna bless you.”, says Ramchand as he pats Aasna's head affectionately

“Raghu bhaiya, Mohan bhaiya... will meet you both again someday, I keep coming to these mountains now and then.”, says Aarav to the boatmen.

“Beta ek baat puchna tha.”, says Raghu.

“Han boliye.”, says Aarav.

“Yeh shehar ki khaini khaate ho kya? Bade din ho gaye Vimal ya Rajnigan...”, asks Mohan. He is immediately interrupted.

“Aree kya puch rahe ho bachcho se! Baitho chup chaap!”, says Ramchand agitated.

All four of them expect Ramchand laugh out loud.

“Go get back to your camps. It's almost noon. God bless you both. Jai Shri Krishna!”, says Ramchand.

Chanting the same, the lover and the beloved walk back towards their camps. They greet Ramchand for one last time. It's going to be a long trek.

“I can't walk anymore.”, says Aasna.

“We haven't even trekked half the way to our picnic spot. We can't delay anymore or we will be found here!”, says Aarav.

“The search must be already going on. Let's take a short break please.”, Aasna pleads.

“No, we have to reach in time.”, says Aarav.

They look at the remaining path ahead. Both are daunted by the distance they have to cover in less time. The river is on the other side of the mountains, opposite of the entry gate. The distance from entrance to picnic spots is much less.

“Maybe you have to be the Rahul to this Meena.”, says Aasna, referring to a popular movie scene.

"No way! I am not being... the Halwa wala, in this situation at least.", says Aarav.

"Haha... then become Pawan, I will be your Munni.", says Aasna, referring to another popular movie.

"God that's going to be more difficult. But we have no other choice. Get ready for the ride.", says Aarav.

Saying this Aarav kneels down on one knee. Aasna goes behind him and climbs on his back. Aarav held her legs with strong grip.

"We just danced to our last breath. Give me the strength to carry this woman all the way to the peak God.", Aarav prays, to humiliate Aasna.

Aasna clutches Aarav's neck softly after that jab.

"Okay sorry! Good lord.", says Aarav.

"Speak less, work more. Chal mere **Sirsa** tik tik tik!", says Aasna.

"Wow. That was personal. You will pay for this.", replies Aarav gravely.

"Yes you will get your fare. Drop me at my location first.", Aasna jabs again.

"What the... anyways. Well, did I score good?", asks Aarav.

"What score?", asks Aasna.

"This was all a test of my love... right?", Aarav reminds.

"Oh yes. I would be skeptical.", says Aasna.

"Skeptical, wow.", says Aarav.

"Eight point two five out of ten.... yup that's your score. That's good!", says Aasna.

"Are you giving me IMDB ratings? Eight... point two five. A five just for consolation. Amazing. You are unreal.", Aarav says astonished.

"I am a very calculative person.", says Aasna.

"What went wrong with your calculation while choosing the partner?", Aarav says slowly.

"You jealous rouge! You are not going to berate my man while carrying me on your back!", says Aasna agitated, but in a humorous way.

They kept engaging in the funny quarrel trekking through the hills. Aarav never saw this side of Aasna. He has brought out the real, fun loving person Aasna is. Aarav is loving this moment. So is Aasna. Now that she believes in him, she is not keeping what she is feeling, what she wants to say, anything to herself. Speaking of his boyfriend, he is well, in the driver seat of his life.

“See the list and buy the right things, or else Maa will eat me up.”, says Yash. He is in a grocery store with his friend.

“Why would I not like to see that happen?”, said his friend subtly.

Both stare into each other’s eyes for a moment. It was intense, but one of them smirks a bit and both ended up sneering at each other.

“You are speaking a lot nowadays... huh.”, says Yash.

“My money is being spent on your grocery, why not.”, says his friend.

As they reach the billing counter, Yash meets someone unexpected, it’s Perna.

“Oh hi Perna! How are you doing?”, says Yash.

“Wow, what a start to the day by seeing your face. I am good.”, says Perna.

“Wait... what was that? You hate me that much?”, asks Yash.

“What else do you expect? Should I say... *oh my... there he is.. Yash, Yash Kapoor!*”, says Perna in a wacky manner.

“You are so dramatic lol. So you are doing well, good to hear. How is your brother doing?”, asks Yash.

“He is in his college trip, must be having a good time.”, answers Perna.

“Ma’am, here’s your bill.”, says the cashier.

“Hmm... in his college trip, having a good time.... with Aasna.”, says Yash.

“True it is. Nothing is going your way.”, says Perna taunting him.

“Yup, I hate it. But you know pretty well, things will go my way soon.”, says Yash, with a confident tone.

“Sir, it’s ₹1,780/-.”, says the cashier.

“Hey... Why is your friend paying your... grocery bills?”, asks Prerna.

“The money his mother gave for the groceries, he bought a new pair of sports shoes with them. Could have bought it later, but who is gonna convince this cricket freak.”, says his friend.

“Wow, typical Yash, wasting his mother’s hard earned money.”, says Prerna.

“That’s my money! Yeah, she deposited in my account from her purse, but it’s not the same thing!”, says Yash haphazardly.

“You know what, I don’t even want to judge your ethics. It’s not worth it.”, says Prerna.

“Fine. You didn’t reply to what I said earlier.”, says Yash.

“Oh that, uhh... mmm.. yes.. that’s true.”, says Prerna hesitantly.

“Yes! They are going to enjoy their friendship for the time being, and then... anyways. I heard Aarav wants to study out of state. Great.”, says Yash.

He had a very proud tone.

“Yes he does... he wants to... continue his higher education... in a different place.”, Prerna says, stuttering a bit.

“Atul Sir wants his son to reach the sky's limit. It wouldn’t be good if he stays here for long.... right!”, says Yash, nefariously

“What do you want to say Yash! Say it clearly!”, says Prerna agitated.

“The truth... that things... are going my way. Won’t waste anymore of your precious time. Take care.

Let’s go Viren.”, says Yash.

Yash leaves with his friend. Viren had a look of disgust on his face as he walked out of the store with Yash. Prerna stood with her bag, holding her head with the other hand. Yash knows well what the future has kept in for Aarav and Aasna. He is too happy about it. Prerna is tensed. Yash has left Prerna worrying about her brother. The friendship of Aarav and Aasna has turned into a bond of trust and joyousness. Will the fate keep their friendship intact, or Yash's presumptions will become a reality?

“Dear Diary...

What an amazing day it was! I can't describe it in words, but because it's you, I have to put it into words. I finally visited the place I wanted to see since childhood! The village, folks believed it's story of being sacred is a myth, they were wrong all this time! I saw it through my eyes, it was simple yet so magical! Satpura village is a hidden gem. It's a magic without any spell, but the joyousness and ecstasy people carry in their hearts. Their culture is just a step ahead, the most spellbinding way of life I have ever witnessed. If their Lord, *Hayasirsa* or the God of Universe as we know him, Krishna wants, I will go there again. The hospitality the villagers gave me, the care and affection Ramchand bhaiya bestowed upon me, and the happiness Aarav showered on me, it's truly the best day of my life. I may not live this day ever again. Aarav, I seriously can't express how immensely relieved he has made me feel today. I have never seen a confession like that. Usually the lovers hug and kiss each other after the confession or proposal, but because he is Aarav, he restrained himself and rather danced with me in tune of God of love himself! The world will never see a lover like him. But, why me? Why did he choose me for such a love, where even unconditional as a characteristic feels like an understatement? He knew I am in a committed relationship. How did he get the courage to have that feeling for me, for all this time, when he knew, I will forever stand by Yash's side? Just for the lover he is, I want to ask that same question, the villager asked Aarav... is he the second coming?... Obviously he is not, but how can he win a heart so easily? Why was it so difficult for him for the last three years? I never stopped him though I avoided him. If respect is the reason, then why give that to a simple girl like me? A great personality deserves that amount of respect. Do I mean so much to him? Why..... Aarav you are so stupid! I have to appreciate him, forever, isn't it? That's all for today, see you again the next day.” Aasna writes down on her diary.

She was sitting under a tree. She stops writing, keeps the diary in a small bag, and joins her friends Sarika and Nitya at the bonfire.

“Did he give all that knowledge to you? Him?”, asks Nitya, perplexed.

“Yes, I have never seen that side of Deepak. It’s hard to believe right. But it’s true.”, says Sarika.

“What did he say? Anything interesting.”, asks Aasna.

“Deepak just gave her a whole speech on why she must interact with people and let her make a comfort zone among some people around her for herself. Yes, Deepak, the second Mr. Maheswari.”, says Nitya in a humorous way.

“It’s hard to believe, but I think Deepak is that person who will definitely encourage everyone to you know... celebrate themselves, just like he does.”, says Aasna.

“He isn’t really like that always. He has a side which I saw today and I am astonished.”, says Sarika.

“Is he better that way?”, asks Nitya.

“He is good both ways... I just imagine, if his best friends know that he is a humble man too...”, says Sarika.

“You don’t need to tell a person about your inferior side if you care for the person, it gets discovered by the involved people eventually. Like I did today.”, says Aasna.

“Yes yes... you were having a great time today Aasna. That mad lover just took you off the aisle! Wonderful!”, says Nitya.

“I was really worried, how did you not tell me before going to that unknown place!”, says Sarika.

“Sorry Sarika, it was just all of a sudden. We never planned it. All of it happened in a flow... but it turned out so beautiful.”, says Aasna.

“I never really thought Aarav will not take a risk, but never believed he will actually cross those limits! He got a good scolding from your teacher though... haha!”, says Nitya.

“Madhuri ma’am was really mad at him lol.”, says Sarika.

“He didn’t just cross a bar, he flew out with flying colours. He will never regret for what he has done today, he will be so happy for himself.”, says Aasna.

“You know Aasna, boys only reveal their deepest feelings to their someone special. Perhaps, you are really special to him.”, says Nitya.

“Okay Nitya... I get it.”, says Aasna with a little coy smile on her face

Sarika went into a deep thought. She is suddenly feeling traumatic by something. She thinks to herself, did Deepak tell her his inner thoughts, because he likes her? Does Deepak really feel that way? Deepak, out of all, chose her? She gasped heavily. She looked at the crowd, and found Deepak. She looked at him with the eyes of disbelief. Her mouth is slightly opened. Aasna noticed that, she looks towards the direction where Sarika was staring in awe. Well, Aasna felt the same, but the reason was different.

Deepak with Aarav, Ranjit, Arun and other students were planning something crazy.

“Thik se laga... apna wala sabse mazboot hona chahiye.”, says Deepak.

“Abey gandu, main subah se itna idhar udhar ho chuka hun, thoda toh reham kar?” , says Aarav.

“Did I tell you to run away to that village on the other side of the river with Aasna? Without informing anyone here... not even me. Tu chota bachcha hai kya! Kuch ho jaata usko toh!” , says Deepak a bit agitated.

“You aren’t worried about me I guess.” , says Aarav.

“I would sit near you and you die of a snake bite or something, I won’t care about it at all. I won’t even find it out.” , says Deepak.

“Snake bite... what! What a miserable friend you are.”, says Aarav frantically.

“Deepak, look at this... can your cart beat ours. I don’t think so.”, says Arun.

“Oh Laila, your cart will break off mid race.”, says Deepak.

Yep, the boys found three carts in the hill and now they are getting ready to race with it on a slope. Absolutely reckless.

“Not Laila, my cart fly like the Majnu.”, says Arun.

“Majnu udd nahi raha tha... bhatak raha tha pahadon pe. Teri gaadi bhi waisi hi bhatkegi.”, says Deepak.

“Don’t make fun of my favourite folklore. Let’s get ready.”, says Aarav.

“Ranjit, your cart looks in good condition. Not good for us.”, says Arun.

“He has got a girl on his side. Its over for him.”, says Deepak.

The other four boys laugh.

“I will win. Don’t underestimate her.”, says Ranjit hesitantly.

Three carts, three teams. Ranjit and a girl. Arun and his friend. Aarav and Deepak. They are ready to go. The other students gather below the slope for the action. They are cheering loud.

“On your marks!”, says a boy below.

Three boys get ready to remove the brick in front of the cart wheel.

“Get set!”, says the boy.

All the competitors sit tight on their carts. Aasna, Sarika and Nitya join the students below

“Go!”, says the boy.

The three boys remove the brick, run behind, climb on it and join there partners. The carts start rolling down! The crowd down is cheering loud.

Half the way, the wheel on the left side of Arun's cart gets separated! His carts falls on the left side but the right wheel keeps rolling the cart down... Arun and his friend had no other choice but to leave it. One down! The race is intense between Deepak's and Ranjit’s cart. Both are almost reaching the end. Suddenly the girl with Ranjit takes out her phone, causing some movement.

“WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?” , says Ranjit frantically.

“I need to capture this moment! Just a second, let me... can I stand?”, says the girl.

“Are you serious.... Don’t stand up... don’t... no no no no!!!!”, says Ranjit.

The girl stands up slowly, but the cart changes it’s direction, flips the other way... and both Ranjit and the girl tumble down and out of the cart... just near the end of the slope!

Aarav and Deepak smoothly win the cart race! The crowd cheers loudly. Aasna and Nitya have a laugh and clap for the winners. Aarav and Deepak celebrate their win jumping out of the cart and Deepak started dancing like a mad man. Aarav tried but his back gave up after a tough day. Sarika is the only person in the crowd who is still in deep thought, but reacting with a subtle smile and clapping.

“That was the funniest race I ever saw. It was so creative too.”, says Aasna.

“Utter nonsense. How stupid boys can be... wow.”, says Nitya

“I mean... Ranjit's teammate was quiet smart right.”, says Aarav from behind.

“Not all girls are like that!”, says Nitya.

“He knows that Nitya, don't start a war here now.”, says Aasna.

“Women (imaginary sip).”, says Aarav subtly.

Nitya looks around for a weapon, doesn't find anything, looks at Aarav sternly. Aasna chuckles.

“By the way where's Sarika?”, asks Aasna.

“She was just here.”, says Nitya.

“Where'd she go... oh right there... with Deepak.”, says Aarav, pointing at Sarika walking towards Deepak.

“Hey Deepak, I had to ask you something.”, says Sarika, stumbling a bit.

“Yep ask”, says Deepak.

“Just answer me in... yes or no.”, says Sarika.

“What's the matter, is all good? Did I do something?”, asks Deepak.

“No you have done nothing. Just promise me you won't ask anything in return. Answer me with yes or no.”, says Sarika.

“Okay... go ahead.”, says Deepak. He is concerned.

“Do you... oh no why am I... like... uhm... no.. uh... how should I..”, says Sarika very hesitantly.

“Sarika... Sarika calm down... calm down. Okay.. now take a deep breath... relax.. yup now ask me your question.”, says Deepak.

“Deepak... do you like me?”, says Sarika and instantly looks down, squinting her eyes.

Aarav, Aasna and Nitya just froze on the ground after hearing that.

“What! Who said... what?”, says Deepak, uttering in disbelief.

“Just say yes or no!”, says Sarika, still looking down.

“No! I mean, I am fine with you, I just don’t like you... that way.”, says Deepak hesitantly.

“Uff... thank lord. I am sorry for that stupid question.”, says Sarika.

“No who said it to you that I... LIKE you?”, says Deepak a bit agitated.

“No one said it, Nitya and Aasna were talking... Nitya said, boys convey their feelings only to their someone special. That’s why I thought we had that conversation, because you... like me.”, says Sarika.

“Wow. Sarika you are not the first person I said this to. I said it to you just to let you know, how important it is to interact with other people around and find your real self. It couldn’t have been possible for you to understand if I wouldn’t have talked about myself a bit. Sarika, you just scared me.”, says Deepak, exhaling some breathe out.

“I understood what you meant, still I assumed something so stupid. I am really sorry Deepak.”, says Sarika.

“It’s okay. But Sarika, tell me... if I had said yes, how would have you handle it?”, asks Deepak.

“Uh oh... I couldn’t have.”, says Sarika a bit reluctantly.

“Why?”, asks Deepak.

“Why would someone like me, someone so boring, no one would even think of loving me I guess.”, says Sarika.

“That’s so wrong of you. Does Aarav have some specific reason to love Aasna, he doesn’t. Just like that, if someone ever loves you, he won’t have any reason. Any reason.”, says Deepak.

Aarav hesitates a bit after hearing that. Aasna smiles and looks away. Nitya is chuckling, then clenches her lips.

“Oh really. That would be... weird.”, says Sarika.

“Don’t think about it much. Stay happy with who you are and trust those who care about you. Don’t mind these silly things. Love is very complicated.”, says Deepak.

“Yes, it’s for them. Not me.”, says Sarika.

They remain quiet for sometime.

“Yeah... well Sarika.. I had to tell you something too.”, says Deepak

“Huh.... what?”, says Sarika, staggered.

“May I... ?”, says Deepak as he brings his hand up.

“Yes but what is...” , asks Sarika.

Deepak, with utmost care, opens Sarika hairclip. Sarika is shocked. The three kids standing at par watching this conversation, Aasna, Aarav and Nitya gasp for a moment.

“Open hair suits you more. You look better. See yourself once... maybe you find at least one reason, for why someone would love you. Okay... guys are calling me. I need to go.”, says Deepak and leaves smiling away.

Sarika stood still with the hairclip in her hand. She takes out her phone and looks herself for a moment. She really liked herself with the open hair. She smiles softly. Deepak sees this and smiles on his own. Sarika looks towards Deepak. Deepak quickly turns around and grabs Ranjit by neck and goes away with him. Sarika is smiling gladly after a long time. Her friend Aasna couldn’t believe it. She runs towards her and appreciates the simple but new change in her look. Aarav and Nitya cherished the moment.

“Wow, Deepak really liked Sarika all this time.”, says Nitya.

“No, he wants Sarika to love herself first. For long she has been a shadow from herself. Deepak is trying to make her realize she needs to keep herself first before a version of someone people expect from her.”, says Aarav.

“What an amazing dude.”, says Nitya.

“He is.... indeed.”, says Aarav.

This is great! Deepak is on his quest which is really changing Sarika as a person! But who knows, there might be some truth in what Nitya thinks, who seems to act bit different when Aarav and Aasna's name are taken together. Aasna, on the other hand, has completely realized that there's no lover like Aarav. But she really feels bad, she can't do anything above this. Still, she is proud of Aarav. Aarav seems to be in the happiest place he could be in. But here's the thing, for how long? After this trip, will everything be same? Or the fate has planned something different?

“Om Bhavod Bhava Sambhavaya Ishta Darshana Om Sam Om Namaha....”, chants Atul as he waters a pot which had Bel leaves.

“Sir, if justice isn’t served in a case, then isn’t the law meant to be called weak enough to provide justice?”, asks Yash.

He was spending quite a healthy amount of time with Atul during Aarav's college trip.

“Why such a philosophical question today lad?”, asks Atul.

“Just a sudden curiosity I guess.”, says Yash.

“Alright Yash, tell me, did you ever take a mobile phone to your school, during your school days, by any chance?”, asks Atul.

“No sir.”, says Yash.

“Let’s say one day, you took a mobile to your school. Now you are punished for that, and then you again bring the phone to the school, you were punished again, you brought it for the third time. Tell me, is it right?”, asks Atul.

“Not at all.”, answers Yash.

“Now tell me, whose fault it is, is it the school who couldn’t give a stricter punishment to you when you brought the phone the first time, or it’s you, who is repeating the same mistake, again and again?”, asks Atul.

“That’s conflicting, but I guess it’s going to be my fault.”, says Yash.

“So in this case you are rightfully punished. Isn’t it?”, asks Atul.

“Yes sir.”, says Yash.

“But in a different scenario, you bring the phone to school, and you give it to a friend. Your friend is caught and punished for using the phone in class. Was it right?”, asks Atul.

“No sir.”, answers Yash.

“But whose fault it is here again? The school who punished the innocent student, or you who brought the phone at first place?”, asks Atul.

“It’s absolutely my fault here sir.”, says Yash.

“In both the cases it was your fault. So, if an innocent is wrongly punished by a verdict, which was given after seeing the absence of evidences and facts, is that law weak enough to give justice or is the real culprit, the one who erased all the evidences, is actually at fault?”, asks Atul.

“The one who put the innocent in the trap is actually at fault here, because the verdict was passed abiding the law.”, says Yash.

“Exactly. I am glad you understood. Even life is just like that. We keep doing something wrong, and we have no idea about it. You are benefiting from your ill deeds but the consequences is being faced by someone else. We can’t blame the Almighty here, it’s you.”, says Atul.

“Uhm... yes sir. That’s absolutely true.”, Yash didn’t care about this part.

Someone rings the door bell.

“I will receive the person. Be seated”, says Atul.

He opens and sees a courier standing outside the door.

“Good morning sir, is this Mr. Aarav Verma's address?”, asks the courier.

“Yes it is.”, says Atul.

“Here’s a letter for him.”, says the courier.

“Okay, thank you.”, says Atul as he receives the letter.

“Sir, please give your signature here.”, says the courier.

“There you go.”, says Atul as he signs the sheet.

“Thank you sir, have a good day.”, says the courier as he leaves.

“What’s this... let’s check. Aarav has received a letter... oh.. its a renowned... oh my god.”, says Atul.

He looks a bit shocked.

“What is it sir?”, asks Yash.

“Let me read the letter... I can’t believe this.”, says Atul.

Yash patiently looks at his professor reading the letter. Atul seems to be astounded by what he is reading.

“I can’t believe it. When did he apply in this university?”, says Atul.

“Let me check the envelope... my god... it’s the... this is the most decorated university in this country.”, says Yash, excited.

“He has been... Aarav has been... oh my son... Om Namah Shivaay!”, says Atul joining his hands and looking up in the air.

The door bell rings again.

“Sir let me check it this time.”, says Yash.

Yash moves out of his seat, closes in, grabs the knob and opens the door.

“Pap-..(screams)... oh.. Hey Yash... good to see you.”, says Aarav.

He has returned from his trip. Aarav was too excited to meet his father, but his nemesis stood at the door, something he didn’t expect.

“You... (chuckles)... can call me what you were going to say. Remember that dialogue... If you’re bad... I am your...”, whispers Yash.

“Haan chal chal apne baap ko mat sikha.”, Aarav replies humorously.

“ Ahem! Anyways, welcome back! It’s even better to see you here! Come in!”, says Yash.

Both lightly hug each other.

“Papa... I am back!”, says Aarav as he runs towards his father.

“How was your trip beta?”, asks Atul after hugging his son tightly.

“It was amazing! It was the best trip I ever went on.”, says Aarav.

“I am glad you had a great time.”, says Atul.

“Sir, are you not going to tell him about this letter?”, says Yash.

“Oh yes... So you are doing a lot of things without my knowledge.. huh!”, says Atul.

“What did I do now Papa? And what letter are you talking about Yash?”, asks Aarav.

“Here, read this letter.”, says Atul, handing the letter to Aarav.

Aarav reads the letter... he is in absolute disbelief. He smiles amazed. He looks at his father and is almost going to break out in joy but he stops smiling, looks at Atul scared.

“Oh Papa, I attended this webinar from this university and I was invited for a personal interaction with one of the lecturers too. We had a meeting on Google Meet and it was a great conversation. They did say they are going to invite students to enroll into the university, but I am going to be one of them... I never thought that.”, says Aarav.

This renowned university has invited Aarav for enrolling in his desired course! This is huge!

“Finally, finally you’re going to achieve everything you want. I am so proud of you boy. Ah.. oh I am sorry.”, says Atul, as his eyes starts tearing down a bit.

“Papa.. Please.”, says Aarav and hugs his father again.

“Aarav, words are not enough to say how happy I am feeling right now. You really are a champ. Congratulations!”, says Yash.

“Thanks Yash.”, says Aarav.

Both hug it out. Yash whispers into Aarav's ear. It is audible to Atul though.

“Life main ab itna aage nikal jaa, ki kabhi piche mud ke waapis na aa paaye.”, says Yash.

The tone had some brute force in it. Yash had a grin on his face that was screaming thousand words. Aarav understood the context. It suddenly dawned upon him. Soon, he is going to lose something... something he just relished few days ago. Something he was waiting for years. Atul had a puzzled look on his face seeing the change in Aarav's expression.

“Aarav, I just want to see you going ahead in life like this, keep it up!”, says Yash.

“Yes... I will... thank you.”, says Aarav, hesitantly.

“Sir, there can’t be any better way I leave this place today. This news, this is special. I am going to remember this for long. Thank you sir, will see you soon Aarav. I am very happy.”, says Yash.

“Take care, and drive carefully to your home.”, says Atul.

“Bye.”, says Aarav.

Yash leaves, proudly. The look on his face, the way he is walking out, said it all. It’s like this news was like blessing in disguise for him.

“So Aarav, this is really good. We are definitely going to celebrate this. But hey, did you do it?”, asks Atul.

“What Papa?”, asks Aarav.

“What I told you to do. Did you confess?”, says Atul.

“About that... (exhales)... Yes I did.”, says Aarav.

“What did she say! Aasna was very happy wasn’t she?”, says Atul.

“She was. We also went to the village across the river, met with the people there, danced to their folk music. We had a great time.”, says Aarav.

“Awesome! How did you say it? It wasn’t a proposal so how did you confess your feelings?”, asks Atul.

“I said... Papa.. I told her...”, says Aarav incoherently.

“What’s the matter... say it.”, says Atul.

“Papa... (looks away)... I told her I am going to give her a lot of happiness.. forever.”, says Aarav.

Aarav squints his eyes, closes his fists tight, and realizes, he is going to leave Aasna behind soon. Atul realizes the reason behind this reaction.

“I just promised her that Papa... I promised her. I have no idea how, but I will.”, says Aarav, as he smiles sorrowfully.

He looks down with that smile, nods his head. Aarav is feeling very regretful.

“Beta, be grateful for what you've promised. Some way or other, you will fulfill it.”, says Atul.

Aarav nods his head again, but this time approving what his father said. With that smile, he walks out with his bag towards his room. Atul looks around the house, and his eyes stop at the picture of his wife. He looks at the picture regretfully.

“What have we done Atul?”, says Vedika.

Atul imagines his wife as she is sitting on the sofa, distressed.

“It’s all my fault. All this time I grew him up to be an ambitious person in life. He is on the brink of fulfilling his dreams, but in order to fulfil it, he has to break his promise. The promise he made to his love, out of love. It’s all because of me Vedika.”, says Atul.

“No Atul, I promised you, I will take every blame of yours. Please don’t blame yourself.”, says Vedika, as she walks up to Atul and caresses his face.

“What else should I do then? What else?”, says Atul as he sits down on the sofa devastated.

Vedika sat beside him, clinging on to his shoulder.

“Maybe, his story of love isn’t this easy. Maybe both Aarav and Aasna are meant to see a lot more in this tale. We must not feel upset, and celebrate Aarav's achievement today. Let’s be the proud parents for now.”, says Vedika.

“You are right. I have to make him feel better.”, says Atul.

Atul was seated there for long and thinks about the situation. What a roller coaster of emotions did we see right here. Aarav’s happiness of getting a big break in life, is going to take away something really precious from his life, maybe. Atul's happiness of seeing his son succeed in academics, turns into a concern about something Aarav is going to lose what he loves. This is, the friendship with Aasna and the promises he made. Yash, he is on the moon right now. This was something he wanted to do. He thought he had to deal with it, but things have turned out his way. He took a lesson from Atul here, but ironically, he ends up being that student who brings the phone to school, even here. Aarav is the one facing the consequences. This was expected, but is it going to turn out really bad?

“Why isn’t anyone picking up my call?”, says Aarav, as he is in his room trying to contact his mates.

Perna, Deepak, Nitya... no one picked up his call.

“Let’s call her.”, says Aarav.

Aarav dials a number, the most favourite contact in his phone, and in his life.

“Han Aarav, how are you?”, says Tanuja.

“Namaste Chachi Ji. I am good, how are you?”, says Aarav.

“We are doing really good by God's grace. How was your trip?”, says Tanuja.

“It was fun. Chachi Ji, where is Perna? I am trying to call her... she isn’t answering my calls.”, says Aarav.

“I can’t tell you. After lunch she was in her room. Suddenly around 4:30 pm she stormed out of the house, she was very happy though. She didn’t tell me anything.”, says Tanuja.

“Oh, fine. Well, I need to inform you this Chachi Ji. I have been invited from a very reputed university for enrolling into the institution.”, says Aarav.

“Amazing Aarav! You make me so proud Beta. Chacha Ji will be so happy hearing this news. God bless you!”, says Tanuja.

“Thank you so much Chachi Ji. You know you are very important reason behind my success. The one motherly figure I look up to. Everything I want to achieve as a mother's boy... I want to achieve it for you. Keep blessing me Chachi Ji.”, says Aarav.

“Tu mera beta hai. You will make me proud, no doubt in that. I'll tell Perna you were looking for her.”, says Tanuja.

“Okay Chachi Ji, have a good day.”, says Aarav.

“Bye beta. Stay blessed.”, says Tanuja.

Tanuja cuts the call. Ecstatic, she runs to the living room to give her husband the incredible news.

“I have a great news for you.”, says Tanuja.

Varun didn't hear his wife, as he is busy watching a cricket match on TV.

“Abey wicket lo inki maa ki-.”, yells Varun.

“VARUN!!!”, Tanuja screams loudly.

“Aree baap re! Why do you both, mother and daughter stun me out of nowhere?! Why not talk standing in front of me?”, says Varun.

Tanuja picks up the newspaper from the adjacent table, rolls it and charges towards Varun.

“How many times will I tell you not to cuss on Tuesday! How many times you impious man!”, says Tanuja angrily, as she starts beating Varun with the newspaper.

“I am sorry! Stop beating me! Extremely sorry! But... try to understand, it's a test match... England vs Australia.. The Ashes!”, says Varun, with a wailing tone.

He stood up and goes beside the sofa to protect himself.

“Whose ashes?”, asks Tanuja.

“Meri maa... the name of the Test series is Ashes!”, says Varun.

“Those playing there, don't they have their mothers and sisters?”, says an enraged Tanuja.

“Yes...”, says Varun.

“So why would you cuss them!”, says Tanuja.

“Sorry...”, says Varun.

“Sit down! What was I saying...? Bappa.. (holds her head to calm down)... Yes! I have an amazing news for you.”, says Tanuja.

“What? Tanuja... we already have Perna... not another one. ”, asks Varun.

Tanuja was fuming in her head. She throws the newspaper roll at Varun's face so hard that his specs fell down.

“You scum, want to have babies at this age? Can you be serious for once?”. says Tanuja.

“Okay... Apologies, your highness. What news have you brought to me.”, says Varun.

It’s evident, he loves his wife.

“Aarav has been invited from a very popular university, he might get his higher education from there. Isn’t this great? I am so happy!”, says Tanuja.

“Oh wow! Which university? This is huge!”, says Varun, diverting all his attention to Tanuja.

“He didn’t say, wait (takes out her phone) let me check, Aarav has sent something.”, says Tanuja.

She looks out for the message, finds in her notifications, clicks on it and reads it out.

“Oh my God... this is... unbelievable!”, says Tanuja, overwhelmed.

“No way! Let me see... my boy! Ah... it’s one of the top rated institutes in India! One of my colleagues did his MBA there. Brilliant Aarav! Bilkul apne baap pe gaya hai!”, says Varun.

“Her mother was a great student too. Genes. Kaash Prerna bhi achi student hoti.”, says Tanuja.

“No Tanu... she is best the way she is. She is studying what she wants, and she will prosper eventually.”, says Varun.

“Typical Indian male mindset, you don’t want to see the girls grow?”, says Tanuja.

“This is where the problem lies. Indian parents have this unnecessary insecurity that their kids might fail in fulfilling the dreams we think our kids are aspiring, so in the process of making them the best, they forget that their children have their own dreams, their own skill set. But we teach them things like entrances, competitive exams, UPSC, JEE NEET and all those stuff. Who want, they can go for these tests. Or else, as we decided as parents for Prerna, the kids must take their time, study well and achieve their dreams.”, says Varun.

“That’s true. You are an atheist, yet your words always feels like the words of God himself.”, says Tanuja.

“I am your... (gets up and goes behind Tanuja) Pati Parmeshwar after all.”, says Varun as he hugs his wife from behind.

“Okay Patidev!... Don’t get so cozy on Tuesday. (comes out of the hug) Let me see where this girl has gone.”, says Tanuja.

“Tuesday... bigger thorn in my life than Mondays. Prerna said she is with her friend Nitya, will return home by 9 pm.”, says Varun.

“Three days of trip and still she needs to meet her friends, kya karu main iss ladki ka. Fine. Well... let’s watch this cricket match.”, says Tanuja.

“Wonderful, remember those days when we used to watch (turns his eyes on the television)... Aree.. yaar test match main kaun chakke lagata hai saalon!.... Oh no.”, says Varun.

He realized he messed up, yet again. Tanuja just sat beside him. She looks at Varun sternly. Varun pleads for mercy by joining his hands for forgiveness. Tanuja goes on to pick up the remote from the adjacent table.

Aarav picks up his phone from his table and walks into his balcony.

“No one is answering, what has happened?”, says Aarav.

He thinks of calling Aasna. But he thinks he won’t be able to talk to her. The bond is so strong between them now, Aarav thought telling her about this won’t be right at this moment. He keeps looking into his call logs, scrolling up and down, finds out in these four months, he has only called Aasna one or two times. Aarav is amazed by the fact of how he managed to strengthen their bond without calling her, chatting with her, in these times. He smiles subtly. He keeps his phone in the pocket. Aarav walks into his balcony, and looks out. He is stunned by what he is seeing.

“Wait, isn’t those two scooty are of Deepak and Prerna? Are they here!”, says Aarav.

He runs out of his room, walks into the dining room to see Prerna, Deepak and Nitya decorating the walls with balloons and foils. Atul is working with them.

“Guys, what is going on?”, asks Aarav.

“Here’s the man! Join in champ! We are celebrating your success today!”, says Atul.

“Congratulations Aarav! This is the best news of my life!”, says Prerna, as she walks towards him and hugs her brother tightly.

“Thank you so much Prerna.”, says Aarav humbly.

“Bro, will you leave me all alone here? Who will help me cheat in exams now!”, says Deepak, as he clings on his friend devastated.

“Stop the drama and be quiet!”, says Aarav.

“Joking... congratulations brother! Jaa jeele apni zindagi.”, says Deepak

“Thanks Deepesh Puri.”, says Aarav as both share a laugh and hug it out.

BOOM Nitya bursts a Party Popper confetti right near Aarav's right ear!

“Haha! Congratulations Aarav! Very happy for you!”, says Nitya

“Nitya! That was deafening... Lord! Thank you yaar.”, says Aarav. Both do an elbow bump and hug each other.

“We all are proud of you. Sit down, let’s cut the cake!”, says Atul.

“Why all this Papa, it’s just~”, says Aarav.

“To have a child, who will make you proud by little or big achievements, is a dream for many people beta. That’s why I am proud and I need to celebrate this if not you.”, says Atul.

“Thank you so much Papa.”, says Aarav as he hugs his father affectionately.

“Now sit at the table, time for the cake cutting!”, says Nitya.

“Happy Birthday to you! Happy Birthday to you! Happy Birthday Happy Birthday... Happy Birthday to you!”, sings Deepak.

"I wish I could take birth two times a year. Thanks Deepak.", says Aarav.

Everyone laughs at the moment. Aarav cuts the cake as everyone applauds. All have a piece of cake. Deepak and Prerna covered his Aarav's cheeks with some cake. The dinner was too brought from a restaurant. After relishing it and talking stuff, Atul is getting ready to go out somewhere.

"Papa, where are you off to? At this time?", says Aarav.

"Going to give this good news to someone, with this box of sweets and this letter .", says Atul.

"You can go tomorrow uncle, it's kinda late.", says Deepak.

"It will take me some time, not much, I will be back.", says Atul.

"Okay Papa, who are going to meet though? Tau Ji?", asks Aarav.

"I have given one box of sweets to Prerna for that. I am going to meet a friend.", says Atul.

Aarav thought a bit, and found out where is father is going to meet. He looks at his father, wants to stop him, but gives a smile. Atul smiles back. "Kids, stay back for a while, when I return you all can leave.", says Atul.

"Okay Kaka, we will stay here. Aarav, Deepak, Nitya... sit down and let's talk about the trip. Let's hear about everything I missed out.", says Prerna.

"God's grace you weren't there that trip would have turned into a theatre show.", says Deepak.

"Shut up bozo.", says Prerna.

Atul laughs happily and leaves the house in his car.

"Are you serious!?", says Garima agitated.

"Mama it was safe.", says Aasna.

"What if it would have gone wrong? Unknown place, uneducated people, and that unserious brat! How can he be so careless? How can you be so fickle minded Aasna?", says Garima.

“Garima, I know about that village a bit, the people are quite well civilized.”, says Gaurav subtly.

“Keep quiet Gaurav! You going there and Aasna going there, there’s a lot of difference. If anything would have happened,, I am seriously speaking I would have never ever..... AASNA! You are not going to meet Aarav outside college anymore!”, says Garima.

“You can’t keep her away from her friends. Aarav is not a bad person.”, says Gaurav.

“I know he isn’t, but he is reckless, I don’t care about that, just don’t drag my daughter into your recklessness. That’s all I want!”, says Garima.

“Sorry Mama.”, says Aasna.

“You should be. Never go anywhere off limits without your parent’s consent!”, says Garima.

The door bell rings.

“Let me see who is there.”, says Gaurav.

As he opens the door, he is astonished to find who has come to meet him.

“Oh my God! Atul! What a surprise my man! Please come in.”, says Gaurav, as he hugs his friend.

“So long brother, how are you?”, asks Atul.

“Good Atul, come in.”, says Gaurav.

Garima is staggered. She can’t believe it’s Atul. All the memories flashbacks in her mind, but coming out of the thoughts, she bows down and greets Atul.

“How are you Bhabhi?”, asks Atul, with a genuine smile on his face.

“Atul, ah... it’s good to see you. It’s been a long time. Please have a seat.”, says Garima.

“Namaste Uncle.”, says Aasna as she touches Atul's feet.

“You were a little girl last time I saw you, you have grown up a beautiful woman, God bless you Aasna beta.”, says Atul patting her head.

Garima looks at Atul sternly, with a grin hiding her real anger. Everyone sits down on the sofa

“Atul, what made you come here? That too at this time.”, asks Gaurav.

“I just came to give a news. I could have called you but I thought meeting you and your family after years, gifting this box of barfi out of happiness would be a good gesture.”, says Atul.

“What’s the news Atul? Seems like a very good one.”, says Garima.

“Bhabhi, I thought it’s my duty to tell this to you all because Gaurav has been my friend since college days, I have known you for a long time now, and Aasna is a good friend of Aarav. He is has been invited by this university (shows the letter to Gaurav).”, says Atul.

“Wow, this is a very reputed institute. The CEO of Good Bay spices, a friend of mine, is a pass out of this university. Many big names have come out from this place. This is huge. Congratulations Atul!”, says Gaurav.

“May I see the letter? It is (reads the letter)... God is blessing your son, you must be very proud. This is indeed a good news. Let me make a cup of tea for you Atul!”, says Garima.

“No Bhabhi, I just had the dinner. A glass of water will work.”, says Atul.

“You must have something Atul, you have visited us after so many years.”, pleads Gaurav.

“Next time brother, I am full today, the kids brought the food from restaurant. I mean Perna my niece, Deepak and Nitya. Well Aasna, (looks at her as she reads the letter)... yes beta... Aarav is leaving this city.”, says Atul.

“Ah.. oh yes Uncle. This... this is great! I am very happy for Aarav. He deserves it. He has worked really hard. Aarav is set to touch the heights of success. Congratulations to him.”, says Aasna.

“I will tell this to him. Thank you on his behalf.”, says Atul.

Aasna surely seems a bit shook. She seems to realize Aarav is going to go far away for his future endeavours. This really comes out of nowhere. Atul knew Aarav won’t be able to say this to the girl he loves,

so he took the job in his hands. Garima, though congratulated Aarav in her own way, she doesn't seem that pleased, is it because of Aarav taking Aasna to the village without her knowledge, or something else? Everyone else is happy for Aarav for their own reasons. But Aasna, Atul and Aarav himself are seeing beyond this. Aarav doesn't feel good but seems like he is going to accept it. Atul is working to make his son feel better, what's Aasna feeling about this?

Lives start going on normally. The college continues. All the friends meet and have their friendly. The lover and the beloved, meet and talk to each other regularly, but as the days pass, one of them stops the other from overdoing it. It's like both are telling each other let's learn to live apart, without actually saying it. Their friends realise what's happening here. They are concerned, but the way these two are handling it within each other, makes them believe they will be fine. The nemesis between the two, he is grateful. Even though he feels he has won it, he is trying to stay humble about it. Semesters end, results will be out in a month. Aarav and Aasna, decide to meet each other, maybe for one last time.

Aarav rings the bell swinging down from the walls. He then bows down and prays the idol of the deity. Aasna was waiting for him in the temple.

"So... what do you wanna talk about?", asks Aarav.

"What would I want to talk about.. guess?", says Aasna.

"Hmm... Aasna, I am pretty sure I will get good grades to join the university.", says Aarav.

"You are so eager to climb that ladder of success. I see.", says Aasna.

"Not eager, it's just that... I have to do it.", says Aarav.

"Good for you.", says Aasna

"Thank you.", says Aarav.

With every response, there was this weird pause, as if they are forcing each other. Aarav and Aasna, both were really gutted. Aasna decided she will deepen this conversation.

"But Aarav, why didn't you let me know about the invitation from university? Atul Uncle had to come to my place to say it.", asks Aasna.

"Uh... how can I say this. I wasn't able to.", says Aarav hesitantly.

"You are in front of the Mata Rani herself, don't hide anything.", says Aasna.

"I am not hiding anything Aasna. It's like... I was feeling weird.", says Aarav.

"Does our friendship still misses out something, which would make you feel weird of letting me know about your success?", says Aasna.

"No... our friendship is strong as concrete. But... at the end of the day, you are not just a friend for me Aasna. You know how I feel about you, and all I thought was about you. The moment... the moment I read that letter... I realised... I am going to lose you. I couldn't speak to you at that moment and that day itself.", says Aarav.

"Aarav, you will never lose me. You did say I must not think much about being your friend. You will embrace this friendship.", says Aasna, a bit revolted

"I still stand to what I said. This friendship, is the best thing that has happened to me. And people say friendship is an obstacle in the path of love... it's not! It was never... friendship allows you to be in love, and do miracles for the one you love, for infinite times. But as I said, I love you, because I want to give you the happiness, the time, the help, the care... as long as this friendship lasts. So the thing is, this friendship will last, but our time, has come.", says Aarav.

"Aarav, it's not going to be forever. You will return after completing your higher studies. Maybe, you can settle outside, but do come back at some point. Right...?", asks Aasna, eagerly.

Aarav thinks a lot, looks at the idol of the Mata Rani, then looks around the temple, some devotees are doing there puja, some are conducting rituals with the priests, some are sitting and talking to God, in their mind, and looks outside, to see some beggars sitting outside the dwaar...begging all day.

"Aasna, do you know the best thing about visiting a temple?", says Aarav.

"What is it?", asks Aasna.

"You see, there are people here representing their roles in life, at the highest stand the priest, who offers prayers, and also works as a bridge between the deity and the devotees. Then there are people like the one sitting there on a Havan, reciting some mantras, fulfilling a yagna with the priests. Then there are people like that old lady, who doesn't have

that privilege to ask for boons by offering Her something big. All she can do is pray, and offer little things, and sit there quietly and ask for wishes to be fulfilled, she is teary eyed too, must be something very close to her heart. Then there's people like us, who come here to pray the deity, stay here for time, talk with the people we come with, or talk to the Goddess as if She is our friend, and leave. And last, but not the least, the beggars sitting outside the temple. Now... what did these beggars do to get a life like that? They deserve a better life, they do right? Now these people who come and go, they just don't know the importance of being in this divine place. We must have a conversation with the deity, but... this is what we don't do most of the time, we ask for our wishes to be fulfilled and leave. This old lady, why is she crying hard and pleading for something that might remove all those mishaps in her life? Why didn't she receive the boon a bit earlier? Then the powerful men and women, who in order to achieve some success are dedicatedly doing the yagna... they don't want to ask for grace or seek blessings, they want to reach where Mata Rani is, on the top. But what makes them feel they are superior enough to achieve something they want more than us? It's their status and the hard work before reaching that status. But who has reached to that level of success, or I must say that peace of mind? The priests. They are just selfless, they ask Mother Goddess for nothing, rather pray to them for our wellness and prosperity. How do they achieve this kind of wisdom? Aren't they people like us?", says Aarav.

"I get the message Aarav, but what do you want to say here?", asks Aasna.

"That brings me to last one entity. This one... always stays here... in this very temple... all the time.", says Aarav.

"Who Aarav?", asks Aasna.

"The deity, our Mata Rani herself. We all, the priests, the omnipotent, the worshipper, the self-centered, and the marginalized, everyone moves from one place to reach somewhere. Even the beggar goes to other temples or to the roads for begging in hopes of earning more than usual. But our Mata Rani, she sits there calmly, looks upon all of us, and tells us... to keep moving. Keep moving until you reach somewhere. If you aren't being able to do it, but still you are giving

your best, Mata Rani will definitely help you. She will script your destiny well, for sure.”, says Aarav.

“Absolutely, that’s true.”, says Aasna.

“Just like that, I need to move... and keep moving. It’s not about coming back for some time and meet everyone, that’s going to happen occasionally. But in general, if I leave, I can’t come back, I have to keep moving ahead in life. I won’t look back. I will leave this life behind me, forever... Aasna.”, says Aarav, gravely.

This sends Aasna aback for a while. She couldn’t believe it, but tries to control herself.

“Well then... congratulations. I am really happy for you.”, says Aasna.

“Thank you... but you don’t looked pleased?”, says Aarav.

“It’s just me. I just feel... a bit betrayed. For the first time in life, I am getting a friendship, in which I was just being served with nothing but happiness, and not putting any efforts. For the first time, a relation felt selfless, something beyond a bond. And just like that... swoosh!... It’s getting swept away from me. But that would make me very selfish. And I don’t want to be like that. (Turns towards Aarav) Aarav, go ahead. Live a life filled with immense success. You really deserve it.”, says Aasna.

“I am grateful... I wish that wasn’t the case. The time I spent with you, I am never going to live it again. It’s special.”, says Aarav.

“I will also try my best, to reach where I want to. Good luck Aarav. May Mata Rani... and Lord *Hayasirsa* bless you. And I am rooting for you... remember that.”, says Aasna.

“Thank you so much Aasna.”, says Aarav.

Aasna gives a normal, one armed hug to Aarav, feeling proud for him. Aarav, just held her arms and refrained from hugging Aasna completely. Both bow down to the deity one last time and leave the temple.

Meanwhile, outside the temple, Yash was seated outside the temple on his Vespa, waiting for Aasna.

“Sir, I understand what you aspire for me, but I have to be what my mother wants.”, says Yash,.

“You are an absolute gem Yash! You are gifted with great prowess. Do you want to waste this talent of yours, for being a lawyer?”, says Yash's coach from cricket academy on call.

“Being a cricketer is a dream, but my aspiration was to always become a lawyer. Sorry sir, sometimes, you've to choose your parents' wish over your dreams. The best part is, she isn't even forcing me to do it. I just want to do it for her.”, says Yash.

“Yash don't mind my words, but that's your future, not hers. You can't throw away your whole future for something you aren't meant for.”, says the coach.

“I am studying hard sir, don't discourage me... please.”, says Yash.

“You are discouraging yourself, anyways, if that's what you have decided, then go ahead. Find a playground to play cricket for fun, not my academy!”, says the coach.

The coach cuts the call in anger.

Yash looks at his phone with displeasure, nods his head. To his left, he is Aarav descending from the stairs. Aarav sees Yash, and walks towards him.

“So... the conversation is over I guess?”, asks Yash.

“Yeah... the one last.”, says Aarav.

“Uff... yeh dukh khatam kaahe nahi hota bey.”, says Yash.

“What are you unhappy for? You've got what you want. I am leaving.”, says Aarav.

“I was saying that for you, and myself... you don't need to worry about that. Worry about yours. How does it feel... to be on the losing side Aarav?”, says Yash.

“Losing side? From where I am seeing it, I think you have lost.”, says Aarav.

“Me? Please explain.”, says Yash.

“Thinking that you have won in this battle for love, is your loss.”, says Aarav.

“The reason I am thinking that I have won, because I really have. I deserve it. Look deeper into my life, you will find a man, fighting with his dreams, for the aspirations he has set for himself. My father deliberately left me and my mother to struggle. She has sacrificed a lot for me, the only reward for her is... a girl like Aasna.”, says Yash.

Aarav literally frowns at that statement. He maintained his composure though, and continued conversing with Yash.

“Do you think she even wants anything for the sacrifices she has made for you? She is your mother. A mother’s greatest gift is a child, they don’t need anything above it. Ask a son, who has lived without his mother since his birth. Well maybe the only person next to a mother is a spouse, and for me... it’s a girl like..”, says Aarav.

“Aasna... right?”, says Yash.

Aarav nods his head and smiles.

“We both have our rightful reasons I would say.”, says Yash.

“No Yash.. I don’t have any reason to love her, she is the reason, I love her.”, says Aarav.

Yash realized after this line, he isn’t winning this war. He grins the moment after hearing that line. But he still thinks, he loves Aasna more than Aarav. Even if he realizes it, Yash will keep believing he deserves Aasna more than Aarav. In all this Aasna walks down the stairs, to find both her lovers standing and having a conversation. Yash sees her first and has a blissful grin on his face. Aarav turns around, and garnishes a smile on his face, telling a completely different story. Aasna keeps gazing at both of them, with cluster of thoughts in her mind, and calmly sits down behind Yash on the scooter. Yash brings his hands up for a hand shake, Aarav accepts it.

“Good luck for your future. You are going to shine boy.”, says Yash.

“Thank you again Yash, means a lot.”, says Aarav.

Aarav looks at Aasna. Aasna just gives a pure, subtle smile. Aarav understands why she isn’t saying anything. To make her feel better, he brings his hands up for a high five. Aasna chuckles a bit and gives a high five. Yash asks Aasna to start the ride, Aasna agrees. And as the scooter starts, Aasna keeps looking at Aarav, Aarav keeps looking at

Aasna and they keep staring each other, until Yash drives far enough for

both of them to see each other any further. Aasna waves one last time before that, Aarav waves back. Both had a smile on their faces. After she left, Aarav looks down, and the smiling face turned into a dejected one. He walks towards his bullet and starts riding it. Throughout the time, he kept thinking about Aasna, to a level that he felt Aasna is sitting right behind him. Aasna, throughout the time riding with Yash, kept thinking about Aarav, to an extent that when she looks into the rear view mirror, she sees Aarav riding the scooter in front of her. Both instantly come out of the imagination.

This is it. This where it ends. The story of Aarav convincing Aasna about his feelings, comes to an end. Aarav is leaving it all, his love, for his future. Aasna is going to stay with the memories and time spent with him. Is this where this story ends, or is it... just the beginning of a new tale?

Eight years later...

“Woah! This weather is amazing!”, says Viraj

“Oh shut up Vir, the weather is gruesome, still want to sit here in open?”, says Akash.

These two are students of nineteen by age. They live in the hostel of their university and are in campus right now. The weather this evening is stormy. They are in the music hall.

“Akash, chin up man. We have lived on this planet for nineteen years now. There’s so much to go!”, says Viraj.

“Let’s sit down here. Right near the winds blowing, woohoo!”, says Viraj.

“Man, I can’t even hear you!”, says Akash.

“We’ll just talk a bit louder don’t worry.”, says Viraj.

“Alright, clear this doubt of mine. What did Emile Durkheim say about the sociology of law?”, asks Akash.

“I have it in my phone... here it is... *“Durkheim emphasised the influence of history in changing the nature of law and its application. This is because of the expected variation in societies’ values in respect to*

individual rights and responsibilities. This socio-legal critique is detailed in his seminal work The Division of Labour in Society.” That’s what he said.”, reads Viraj.

“Send that in text to me in whatschat.”, says Akash.

“Fine... well Akash, law se yaad aaya, your aunt is a lawyer right?”, asks Viraj.

“Yes, advocate in Supreme Court right now.”, says Akash.

“Damn, man I can count on you if something gets messed up with me.”, says Viraj.

“You will definitely be in trouble some day.”, Akash teases.

“What’s the best case your aunt has fought?”, says Viraj.

“Ah... my aunt was in her mid 20s back then. I think it was this case where she was against a strong defence. Let’s just say... that was a day she would never forget.”, says Akash.

“As per IPC Section 420, Mr. Aniket Rana has been found guilty for cheating and money laundering worth 7.5 crore rupees. He is being sentenced to 7 years of imprisonment and a fine of 10 lakh rupees. The court is adjourned.”, says the judge.

Garima is devastated. Gaurav holds his head in distress. Atul, the defense lawyer and his assistant saw at the judge gutted. Everyone in the court stands up as the judge leaves.

“Mr. Verma, why would you take such a case? Your lose was imminent.”, says Advocate Purvi (Akash's aunt).

“I had to. My responsibility lies for my friend. Well, in the end, justice prevailed. That’s what matters.”, says Atul.

“You didn’t had to take the bullet and hurt your reputation. You are a bright man, and a talented lawyer, you really stretched this obvious case to its limits. Amazing.”, says Purvi.

“A lawyer always has a bad reputation. Congratulations Ms. Purvi, a win in your books registered!”, says Atul.

“Thank you sir. Let’s meet again in another case some time.”, says Purvi.

“Sure. Goodbye.”, says Atul as he leaves the court room.

“You are innocent bhaiya. This is so wrong.”, says Garima as she cries over her cousin’s shoulder.

“I am not innocent. My unfortunate greed for money has done this to me.”, says Aniket.

“We will go to High Court bhaiya. We will definitely get you out of this.”, says Gaurav.

“No I don’t need it. It’s just 7 years, it will pass by in a snap. Don’t worry. I will return as a better man. I promise.”, says Aniket.

With a dejected look, Aniket handcuffed leaves the court hall with the police officers. Garima kept weeping sitting on a bench. Gaurav tries to calm her down.

“Atul, you were really good today. But luck wasn’t in our side.”, says Vedika.

“It was never.”, says Atul reluctantly.

Atul and Vedika stop near Gaurav and Garima as they were walking out of the court hall.

“Atul, thank you so much. You fought this case for us so vehemently, we are grateful.”, says Gaurav as he joins his hands.

“Gaurav, don’t be thankful for a friend helping another friend.”, says Atul as he holds Gaurav's hand.

“Why should I be thankful?”, says Garima.

Garima gets up from the bench, wiping her tears.

“Garima what are you saying?”, says Gaurav.

“Exactly what you heard. Atul Verma, I heard great things about you. But the truth about you is, you are an opportunist! You never wanted my brother to win this case. But by taking this case, you got your spotlight, didn’t you?”, says Garima.

“Which spotlight? I was just doing my job.”, says Atul.

“Don’t try to act smart, you knew Aniket will lose this case. You must have rejected the offer at first place like other lawyers! Why did you fight the case then!”, says Garima enraged.

“Garima, we encouraged him to fight it for you and your brother.”, says Vedika.

“Oh, so you are the root cause of all problems! Why do you think your husband is great at everything huh!”, says Garima.

“What nonsense! Garima, Vedika Bhabhi wasn’t even the first person to insist Atul to fight for us, it was... me.”, says Gaurav.

“Nonsense?! Do you think I am playing around here Gaurav? Atul knew he was losing, he is just another weak man trying to keep his woman's delusional beliefs first!”, says Garima.

“Did you just call my husband a coward?”, says Vedika agitatedly.

“Yes! Because he is! All Atul had to do was prove my brother wasn’t involved in the laundering. But he went out there to act like an anti-hero like he was chosen to fight this case. But the fact is he was our last choice. There’s a perfect word for your husband, a pettifogger.”, says Garima.

“This is ridiculous Garima! Back off!”, says Gaurav.

“No Gaurav. Let her say it all out. You may believe in whatever you have to, but let me tell you a truth, I tried my best, but I couldn’t beat Aniket’s destiny. He had to go behind the bars.”, says Atul.

“And you think you are the one writing those destinies! You are a failure, and mind my words, you are forever going to be a failure!”, says Garima.

“Garima! I won’t hear another word about my husband! Your brother is the solely responsible why he is where he is today! He wrote his own destiny, Atul was just doing his job. If this loud voice and audacity was preserved in your lungs for your brother earlier, maybe he wouldn’t have had to see this day!”, says Vedika.

“Please stop quarrelling Vedika.”, says Atul.

“No, she has to hear it from me! Do you know how many lives your brother has destroyed. 7.5 crores, a man who would have this much money right now would have been walking with a question mark on his head, people asking him from where did he earn or get so much money. Go and read the newspaper, two men committed suicide because they invested in Aniket’s fund! But like Gandhari, you have this imaginary cloth in front of your eyes and can’t see your Shakuni like brother playing with the lives of innocent people!”, says Vedika.

“How dare you cross the line you depraved woman!”, says Garima.

“That’s enough Garima! Atul we need to break this up.”, says Gaurav.

“Leave me! Vedika, you don’t want to suffer do you?”, says Garima.

“Atul don’t even try to stop me!”, says Vedika.

“But..”, says Atul.

“No! Garima, you will make me suffer? Hundreds of people suffering because of Aniket isn’t enough for you.”, says Vedika.

“Keep my brother’s name out of your mouth you bitch!”, says Garima.

“He is a bloody criminal!”, says Vedika.

“VEDIKA!!—“, says Garima.

Garima, with immense anger boiled up in her head, raises her hands and slaps Vedika tightly. The slap was so hard Vedika fell to the other side. Outside the court, a lightning struck down hard. A thunderstorm is near, black clouds have covered the sky.

VEDIKAAA!!!!”, screams Atul as he kneels down to check on his wife.

“GARIMA! ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR SENSES!”, says Gaurav.

Many people gather around Vedika to help her get up. Vedika is dead struck. She has eyes open wide, looking around clueless. Atul tries to calm her down. Purvi, who was watching the drama unfold all this time, held Vedika from behind and helps her sit down on an adjacent chair. Garima instantly realised she made a huge mistake. She almost breaks down in tears holding her head. Gaurav is just walking to and fro hesitantly. Atul, whose eyes turn red with immense anger, turns towards Gaurav. Gaurav is shook to death after seeing that look on Atul's face.

“I am extremely sorry Atul. This is not how it should have...”, says Gaurav.

“Do me a favour Gaurav. Take Bhabhi and leave the court right now. I don’t want to look into her eyes.”, says Atul gravely.

“We will talk this out my friend trust...”, says Gaurav.

“JUST LEAVE!!!!”, screams Atul.

It was so loud that everyone in the hall stood still and looked towards him.

“Okay... Atul.. Okay.”, says Gaurav hesitantly.

He held his wife and left the court hall immediately.

Purvi is helping Vedika drink some water. Atul walks towards her, kneels down near her and checks on her.

“Vedika, you are fine. I am here. Everything’s good trust me.”, says Atul.

“I want to go home.”, says Vedika devastated.

The heavy rainstorm started falling down.

“We will Vedika... we will.”, says Atul.

“The weather is not good sir. Just stay here for awhile, it will be fine in few minutes.”, suggests Purvi. “Yes. Vedika just few minutes and we will leave.”, says Atul.

“I just want to go right now!”, Vedika revolts.

“Okay Vedika alright we will go right now.”, says Atul.

“Fine. Should I help her out?”, asks Purvi.

“No it’s fine, I will do it on my own.”, says Atul.

“Alright, take care sir.”, says Purvi.

“Thank you.”, says Atul.

“Everyone, please clear the hall. Please leave.”, says Purvi to the crowd gathered.

Atul held Vedika tightly as they walk out of the court. The rainstorm is strong as hell. Winds are blowing at a rigorous speed. The lightning are falling down continuously. Atul can’t watch the steps clearly. Both are walking slowly down the stairs.

“Vedika hold me tight and walk carefully.”, says Atul loudly because of the rainstorm.

“Yes.”, says Vedika softly.

They are just few steps way. Vedika thought the steps are over and landed her feet nowhere. She slips and falls down the stairs. Atul sensed it, but could not hold on to Vedika. He panicked like a child after losing his grip.

“Vedika! Where are you Vedika! Are you okay? Speak to me Vedika!”, wails Atul.

“I am down here Atul.”, says Vedika.

Atul quickly goes down... slips on his right leg but reaches Vedika without hurting himself. Vedika gets up, sits down on the floor and burst out tears. She starts sobbing hard. Atul hugs her and tries to calm her down. Vedika is completely devastated. She is crying because of the pain she has in her heart right now. Atul couldn't help himself, he cried too. Both are in heavy sorrow. Both sat there and cried hard. This is catastrophic.

"I am sorry Vedika. I am sorry. This is all my fault.", Atul cries out.

Lightning struck like bolt near the window pane. Lying on her sofa, Garima wakes up after the lightning sound, looks out of the window. She is crying heavily, remembering this unfortunate day of her past in present day.

"I did it again. I did it again. I am an absolute evil. Last time it was Vedika, this time... why... why!", says Garima devastated.

Absolutely disheartening. This is disaster. Eight years have passed. Aasna and Aarav have been separated for a long time now. Where are they in their lives now? Viraj and Akash, two young boys, just talked about the day which is now we know the reason behind the hostility between Atul and Garima. Was this or will become a major obstacle in the story of Aarav and Aasna? What did Garima do in present day, that she is crying about? There's still a lot to this tale.

“Oh my god... that rainstorm came out of nowhere!”, says Viraj.

“I told you it wasn’t safe sitting outside, we are soaked up in water... damn it!”, says Akash.

Both are walking in the hallway towards their room. Viraj and Akash live in the hostel of this university.

“Truly, that case was the first one which went nuts after the verdict was given.”, says Viraj.

“Hmm... Purvi aunty felt so gutted for what transpired. It was just a bad day for that couple.”, says Akash.

“But the love between that lawyer and his wife is very inspirational. The way she defended her husband from that toxic woman, and how the lawyer finally broke out after his wife just couldn’t keep it anymore within her, that’s true love.”, says Viraj.

“The love was raining down with the actual rain. Just imagine how much he would be missing her now.”, says Akash.

“What do you mean?”, asks Viraj.

“Purvi aunty said the lawyer's wife passed away months or years prior that fateful day due to bad health.”, says Akash.

“Oh my. That’s heart breaking. Did he get married again?”, says Viraj.

“I don’t think so.”, says Akash.

“Ah, he loves her truly. But how he is doing it man?”, says Viraj.

“I don’t know, it’s just not our thing.”, says Akash.

“Hmm... wait, maybe he can answer the question.”, says Viraj.

“Who?”, asks Akash.

Viraj points at the door at their left.

“Professor Verma? It’s too late. We can’t disturb him right now.”, says Akash.

"It's not that late, and he's like our friend let's go in!", says Viraj.

Viraj knocks the door and asks if he can come in. The professor fills the glass up with water, and takes his medication. Lights are off, the lamp outside his windows is enough for his room. As he watches the rainstorm falling down, he hears someone knocking at his door.

"Who is it?", asks the professor.

"Sir it's Viraj and Akash, your students.", says Viraj.

"Oh yes boys, get in.", says the professor.

Viraj opens the door, as the boys get in, the professor turns around.

Wearing a full sleeve tee, sleeves above the wrists, a white comfortable trouser, specs on his eyes, and a bit thicker hair now, it's Aarav!

The young boy has grown up and is now a Sociology professor in the university he was enrolled into eight years ago.

"Good evening sir.", says Viraj.

"Sorry for bothering you at this hour sir.", says Akash.

"It's alright boys. Why are you both soaking wet in water?", asks Aarav.

"Nothing sir, we were in the music hall, didn't knew the rainstorm will fall down so strongly.", says Viraj.

"Here, take this towel, wipe off the water. But what makes you seek for me at this hour? I didn't give any assignments to your class if I am correct.", says Aarav.

"Sir, he has a doubt for you, a doubt beyond studies.", says Akash.

"Dang! Finally someone treats me like a friend here and not a teacher. Looks like you both are really curious to clear this doubt. I will definitely help you out.", says Aarav.

"It's not really a doubt sir.", says Akash.

"What do you mean?", says Aarav.

"It's about a topic, we young guns just think about all the time. It's love.", says Viraj.

"Oh well... Why would you ask me about love?", says Aarav.

“Sir, I think you are an intellect of a person and also great at heart, so I believe you can answer such philosophical questions.”, says Viraj.

“Okay... that was not expected. Alright ask the question.”, says Aarav.

Aarav sits on his desk and hears to his student’s query, intrigued.

“Sir... how would you love someone, if you have lost them to your fate or lost any contact with them?”, says Akash.

This question instantly stuns Aarav. Certainly he still loves someone deeply. Viraj and Akash could see the instant change in their professor’s reaction. Aarav, first dawned by the realization, but then smirks, and answers the question.

“You will, you will definitely love them, no matter where they are. If you love them truly, strongly and with absolute purity at heart, you will love that person.”, says Aarav, looking towards the rain.

“How much? It’s not going to be the same sir. Like to what extent can you love that person in their absence?”, asks Viraj.

“When you love someone in their absence, you love them more than you do them in their presence.”, says Aarav.

“Why sir?”, says Viraj.

Aarav, staring at the fall, sobbing quietly in his heart, replies the boys.

“It’s because, in their absence, you miss them. You think a lot about that person. Every single moment, you want them with you, more than you wanted them a moment ago. It just doesn’t stop. You keep feeling that void. You keep loving them, and that love, never fades away, it keeps growing... it keeps growing.”, says Aarav.

Aarav’s eyes are almost moist. Viraj and Akash can see him getting emotional.

“That has really fulfilled our curiosity. Thank you so much sir.”, says Viraj.

“Well, why did you ask this question though?”, asks Aarav.

Both the boys kept thinking for an alternative. The real reason would lead to one of them narrating a long story.

“Sir actually, just outside this university, few steps away, there’s a coffee shop. Every evening, Akash goes there to meet a girl.”, says Viraj.

This instantly hesitated Akash because Viraj was not lying.

“Oh... that’s an incredible development!”, says Aarav.

“Uh... sir it’s nothing like that! I just like to visit the shop.”, says Akash.

“Don’t lie bro! You do like her!”, says Viraj.

“No! Sir he is.... he.. he is lying!”, says Akash.

“Calm down Akash, calm down. Come on... just let me know her name.”, says Aarav.

“Sir... her name is... Karishma.”, says Akash.

“Uff! What a beautiful name!”, says Viraj.

Akash almost raised his hand to thrash Viraj across.

“That indeed is a Karishma. She is sweet, just like your coffee, isn’t she?”, says Aarav.

“Ah... yes sir.”, says Akash.

“Sir, in her presence he can’t convey his feelings properly, because he is still friends and has to maintain that rapport. But in her absence, I now know... he misses her a lot. He loves her... a lot!”, says Viraj.

“Yes, that should be true. Keep going Akash. Let her know how much you feel for her, before it’s too late.”, says Aarav.

“No sir, that probably won’t be the case. No one admires her the way... I do. So I am sure I will succeed. Alright sir, I will leave you there. Good night. (turns to Viraj) Tu mil mujhe room main. (turns back to Aarav) Thank you sir.”, says Akash as he leaves Aarav’s room.

“Hmm... Viraj.”, says Aarav.

“Yes sir.”, says Viraj.

“It can’t be that you just asked for Akash.”, says Aarav.

“Ah... sir.. about me. That’s... I honestly have no idea how to say it.”, says Viraj.

“Why? What’s so unusual about your love?”, says Aarav.

“It’s unusual, because my love..... though I feel for her unimaginably, my love... doesn’t exist.”, says Viraj.

“What happened? Is all good Viraj?”, asks Aarav a bit worried.

“Uh... sir, how should I put this... two years ago... a car accident took her away.”, says Viraj heavily.

Aarav gushed out, devastated after hearing about Viraj's tragedy. He held his shoulders and talked to him.

“I am extremely sorry Viraj. I didn't know that.”, says Aarav disheartened.

“It's okay sir. You are right, in their absence, you love them the most.”, says Viraj.

Aarav hugs Viraj tightly. Viraj felt blissful after hugging his teacher.

“I can't share that feeling, but I can completely understand it.”, says Aarav.

“How sir, do you also miss someone?”, says Viraj.

Aarav looks down... and thinks about... Aasna.

“Yes I do... eight years... I haven't seen her, and haven't heard from her since. All I know, is that she is still there where I left her, living a life without me.”, says Aarav.

“You still have hopes sir, that's beautiful.”, says Viraj

“No Viraj, I don't. She is certainly living happily with the one she always belonged to.”, says Aarav.

“Diya was her name. She was also with someone else when I met her for the first time. But she realized that maybe the person she was with was her first, but she was my last. I would've chose no one over her. And that eventually made me the last person she would've ever looked up to. Just like Diya, I am sure the one you miss knows that you are her last. Don't lose that hope. Please.”, says Viraj.

Aarav is moved by those words. He is teary eyed, emotional beyond words. He pats Viraj on the shoulder.

“God bless you and I pray for Diya's soul, hope its resting in peace. I think you should go back to your room now. It's too late.”, says

Aarav.

“Thank you sir. Good night.”, says Viraj.

“Good night champ.”, says Aarav.

Viraj leaves the room. Aarav walks up to his window. The rain is still strong. He looks out of the window for long. He constantly thinks about Aasna. The rainstorm makes him feel a bit concerned. But at this point, he is helpless. He has been living with this inconsolable feeling for years. He sits down adjacent to his window, and in deep thoughts, his eyes shut down, tears of sorrow dripping down on his cheeks. He sat there and fell asleep.

Aarav really has come a long way, but deep down the absence of Aasna has left him scattered. His students, Viraj and Akash have their own experiences in love. Aarav still loves Aasna, without any hopes. Is this going to go well with him?

All the students, Viraj and Akash too, are seated in the classroom. “Prof. Aarav is a humble man. I knew he was considerate but never knew he will be so down to earth.”, says Akash.

“Love when lost, makes you a different man.”, says Viraj.

“When did he lose his love? Nah man! He doesn’t deserve that.”, says Akash.

“Unfortunately he did. But you don’t! Step up your game bro!”, says Viraj.

“I am keeping it smooth. Things are going the right way. Meri baraat expected date se pehle nikalne wali hai.”, says Akash.

“Je baat! I am going to dance on..... *Tu jaan se pyara ho gaya.. Mere dil ka sahara ho gaya.*”, says Viraj.

“You have a great taste. Bless me with that knowledge of music oh lord. Let me touch your feet.”, says Akash.

“Tathastu.”, says Viraj.

Both have a great laugh.

Aarav enters the class. Students stand up to greet him.

“Good morning class. Good to see some fresh and ready-to-go faces early in the morning! Last night the weather was bad, don’t step outside in such conditions. Please take care of your health. Will you?”, says Aarav.

He looks happy, much different from how he was the previous night.

“Yes sir!”, answered all the boys.

Yes, this is an all-boys institution. Not so popular, but still relevant to this day.

“Alright, if there are any doubts from the last lecture, please feel free to ask. We must clear the past concepts before heading to a new topic.”, says Aarav.

“Sir, why is law studied in a sociological manner?”, asks a student.

“That’s interesting, but the answer is simple because as I said last time, by studying law from a sociological perspective, scholars can gain insight into the ways in which legal systems reflect and reinforce social inequalities, and work towards creating more just and equitable legal systems. Additionally, a sociological understanding of law can help lawyers, policymakers, and other practitioners to better understand the social context in which legal decisions are made, and to create more effective legal strategies and policies.”, says Aarav.

He truly was a good student eight years back.

“Thank you sir.”, says the student.

“Sure. Anyone else with a doubt?”, says Aarav.

There are murmurs around the classroom but no genuine response.

“Alright we would proceed to the new chapter today. It’s ‘The Role of Lawmakers in Indian Society’. It would be unfair to you all if I jump into the topic right away. To understand the complete roles of lawmakers, the lawyers and the judges, we have to dive into and know a day in a life of these lawmakers. Is it clear?”, says Aarav.

“Yes sir!”, say the students.

“Alright, let’s start with the lawyers first. There are two types of lawyers, who can say the types?”, asks Aarav.

“Sir, the two types of lawyers are litigation lawyers and corporate lawyers.”, says Akash.

“Very good. Let’s start with a life of litigation lawyers. These are more than corporate lawyers. Trust me... you would like to choose the latter over the former. A day in the life of litigation practitioners in India is in simple words.... rough. But if you really like the job, you won’t find much to complain about. So it starts by...

9:00 AM – Arrive at the office and review your schedule for the day. Check your emails and respond to urgent messages.

9:30 AM – Meet with clients to discuss their cases, provide legal advice, and answer any questions they may have. Prepare and file any necessary documents with the court.

11:00 AM – Attend court hearings, argue motions, and cross-examine witnesses. Represent clients in legal proceedings and make oral arguments on their behalf.

1:00 PM – Break for lunch. Use this time to catch up on phone calls and emails.

2:00 PM – Review and analyze case documents, including depositions, witness statements, and evidence. Meet with other lawyers to strategize and discuss case tactics.

4:00 PM – Attend mediation or settlement negotiations with opposing counsel to try and reach a resolution without going to trial.

6:00 PM – Wrap up work for the day, but be prepared to work late or on weekends if necessary to meet court deadlines.

...and for instance... when you reach home..”, says Aarav as he proceeds with the teaching.

“Beta... How was your day today?”, asks a woman.

“Tiring as always, lost one case, won the next two... couldn’t reach in time for one hearing because of careless clients, gets adjourned for another date, you can see these bunch of files here... (turns around)... got a lot of reading and research to do.”, says Yash.

Yash is here! After eight years, we now know Yash is a practicing lawyer and living a very busy life. He is wearing the staple black coat, white shirt, and black trouser, now has longer hairs and beard and a frowned look on his face all the time. He has returned home after a tiring, a scheduled day as similar as taught by Aarav to his students on the other side of the country. Yash is received by his mother, Jaya Kapoor.

“Tu itne saare file ghar main baithke padega?”, says Jaya.

“Han... kyun? That’s not something new. I do it all the time.”, says Yash.

“I know you do the research work in home too...”, says Jaya hesitantly.

“Maa, don’t tell me. Have you again said a relative that you’ll help them?”, says Yash.

“Han beta... it’s Vidya Maasi... she has to make an affidavit.”, says Jaya.

Yash sighs. Definitely he is not happy about this.

“Maa... do you understand the meaning of this job?”, says Yash.

“I do. But... it’s family. We must help them.”, says Jaya.

“We should but try to understand, I am fighting cases of many people and many families. I deal with 10- 15 clients and 5-6 courts every day. As a routine I need to spend time in other hearings too. I fight with loads of dirt every day when I take these case files out from shelves. In movies they show a lawyer fights the case valiantly in the court, it’s not like that. One mistake and that judge will suspend me for days how many I have no idea of. It’s the toughest job in this country, because per hundred cases there is one lawyer in India. Per thousands cases there’s one judge in India. With all that in my head, that responsibility on my shoulders, how will I be able to take anymore. Tomorrow I have to appear in six hearings, God knows how long will it go. Do you have any idea how many procedures you have to complete before making an affidavit? Maa... you chose this life for me. Now help me before I say anything else to you.”, says Yash with a waspish tone

“I am sorry beta. What can I do for you?”, says Jaya.

“What have you made for dinner?”, says Yash.

“Your favourite aloo puri and chole.”, says Jaya.

“Thank you so much. Please serve it to me, because I am very hungry. About the affidavit, tell Maasi to clear all the requirements for the affidavit she wants. I will talk to her about it.”, says Yash.

“Alright. See Yash, I know I wanted you to pursue a career in this profession, because I believe with being the toughest, it’s the most reliable profession in this country. This is what, helped me win you, and

let me live with you for the rest of my life. You can still tell me when you want to leave, I will happily let you do what you want.”, says Jaya.

“Maa it’s not about leaving the job. I am doing pretty well. I am content with what I am doing. It’s all that you need to understand, it’s not cricket, where you do the work on the nets, play a match and come back to home and take rest. Being a lawyer takes extra effort. And you knew it better than anyone I can do it. You made the right choice. I

am not going to leave this profession, for you and for myself.”, says Yash.

“Another cricket reference. You love this sport don’t you? If I wouldn’t have told you, you could have been a cricketer... right?”, says Jaya.

“Fair enough. But it’s fine. My friends are playing for the nation now, I get incredibly proud when I watch them. I am also serving the country. So no remorse, only satisfaction.”, says Yash.

With a smile on his face, Yash makes his mother happy.

“Alright Yash, go and fresh yourself up. I am serving your meal.”, says Jaya.

Yash goes back to his room. With a dejected face, he takes out his suit and keeps it on the chair. He looks at a pen kept on his working table. Suddenly something struck his mind.

“I think I should talk to her. Yesterday she didn’t sound well. She seemed to be unhappy. Yes, let’s call her.”, says Yash.

He takes out his phone and makes a call. On the other side, a girl's phone rings. She is sitting on her bed, with a diary on her lap. She picks up the phone, looks at the screen for few seconds, and sends the message that she will call back later.

“I hope everything’s fine. I must take out some time and meet her someday. It’s been weeks we haven’t gone out. Please take care.... Aasna.”, says Yash.

The winds blow up the curtain over window, as the moonlight gets into the room, it falls on right on her face. Aasna, she is in her home. She has a very demotivated look on her face. Not much different, but with a braided hair and now wearing a bindi on her forehead, she looks as pretty as she was eight years ago. But for some reason Aasna doesn’t seem happy. She holds her pen back, and starts writing something in her diary. Turns out, she isn’t writing anything, but just scribbling something with her pen.

This doesn’t feel the same. Yash and Aasna are still together, but something just feels off. The three lovers have grown up and looks like have things have changed a lot. Aarav is a happy-sad professor, Yash is a responsible yet a tired lawyer, and Aasna... she just seems to be missing out on things. None of them seem to be truly “happy”. What is going on? Is this really how things should be

Yash finishes his dinner and comes back to his room.

“Wasn’t there the second T20 match between India and Sri Lanka today? Going to end in an hour I guess, let’s watch it before I start reading these files.”, says Yash as he switches on his television.

As he switches to the channel where the match is telecasting, he sees Raunak, the captain of his academy team eight years ago, batting on the field in a national match.

“Captain, as always... playing really well. 86 runs needed off 74 balls. We can win this.”, says Yash.

The bowler starts his run up, Raunak gets his back foot behind the crease, places himself comfortably. Bowler throws the ball, a full length delivery. With enough space and time, Raunak swings the bat like a golf club towards deep square leg! A huge six off the young man's bat, the captain at non striker's end appreciates. Yash applauds, and suddenly remembers he hit the same shot eight years ago in a 50 over match in his sports club to clinch a double half century. His face turns gloom, goes into a state of despair, realizing the exorbitant sacrifice he made to fulfil his mother's wish. His thoughts are interrupted by a phone call.

“Is it Aasna!? Oh... him. What does he want? (picks up the call) Hey, what's up?”, says Yash.

“What a crazy shot that was! Your friend is going to be the future of Indian cricket!”, says the man on call.

“I know that. But don't think I don't know the reason for you calling me and telling this, I know you inside and out, Deepak.”, says Yash.

That's Deepak! This guy sounds as cheerful as he was years ago.

“It's not like that Yash, I just wanted to know if you are watching the match, I knew you will. Where are you right now?”, says Deepak.

“At home obviously, who is gonna watch a cricket match in that chamber?”, says Yash.

“Good, let’s see India win together. I will be at your place in few minutes.”, says Deepak.

“Aree nahi Deepak sun... (cuts the call). Why is he still like this man.”, says Yash squinting his eyes.

In around 15 minutes, with two box of Pringles, enters Deepak into Yash's room. He is acting as clumsy as he did years ago, except some beard on his face, nothing has changed about Deepak, as of now.

“This match is going brilliantly, let’s enjoy the remaining game with the Pringles chips.”, says Deepak.

“Why'd you bring these? I just had the dinner.”, says Yash.

“Eat some and keep the rest for next time. Raunak is going for a half century for sure right now, just watch. Come on India!”, says Deepak.

Bowler throws the next ball... Raunak runs for a single and keep the strike with him in the next over.

“But don’t you think he is playing a bit selfish? Yeh run lene ki kya zarurat thi, maar deta?”, says Deepak.

“The bowler is Matheesha Pathirana, it’s not easy to hit him all the time. Look at his bowling action, you can’t even read where he will land the ball on the pitch, let alone the direction. That was a lucky shot.”,

says Yash.

“What would have you done to out play Pathirana?”, asks Deepak.

“Well, I would have kept playing down the ground and tried getting runs rather than boundaries. It’s not good to underestimate the abilities of a bowler who has been groomed by MS Dhoni himself, and also you have to trust your own batting skills.”, says Yash.

“Wow, that sounds like a words of an experienced cricketer. Eight years, if you would have kept playing cricket, you would have been giving tough times to these bowlers.”, says Deepak.

He didn’t mean to poke Yash, they have had this conversation before. Yash understands.

“Tough times, huff. The world is giving those tough times to me rather. It is what it is.”, says Yash.

“Sabka wahi haal hai.”, says Deepak.

“Tera kya haal? You are doing the thing you always dreamt of.”, says Yash.

“Bhai mujhe koi shauk nahi tha ye jagah jagah jaake counseling karne ka. Every other day visiting so many universities and institutions for workshops, that too all over India, travelling all the time. It’s tiring as hell. Well, because of her things seem easier, but still it’s very hard. Today thankfully I had to go nowhere, even tomorrow all I have to do is showing up in office. But it’s not something I wanted to do, but now... I like it.”, says Deepak.

“Hmm... how is she?”, asks Yash.

“She is doing great as always. Things have changed so much for her. But she loves Aasna more than you, keeps talking about her. Hey, is Aasna fine? She said, she isn’t doing well.”, says Deepak.

“I need to meet her. What happened yesterday at her home, has left her a bit shallow. Aasna has been feeling like that for a while for a different reason. I can’t understand what it is.”, says Yash.

“Dekhle bhai, kisiko yaad toh nahi kar rahi?”, says Deepak.

“Remembering who?”, asks Yash.

“Someone left us all eight years ago I believe.”, says Deepak, with a sigh.

Awkward silence, but Yash speaks for himself.

“Oh... It can’t be that. I think Aarav is in touch with many of y’all. Aasna would be too.”, says Yash.

“Do you think he will talk to Aasna like this?”, asks Deepak.

“I think he has moved on. And he is living the best of the life out of all of us I think. Aarav should be happy.”, says Yash.

“Lets see... let’s call him.”, says Deepak.

“No way... you have his number?”, says Yash.

“Yah...” , says Deepak as he searches his call logs.

“Bro how did you manage to bring her on this prom night!”, says Viraj excited.

“Well, I just asked Karishma if she would join me in the party, and she got excited about it. I didn’t do much.”, says Akash.

“That’s great! She is a good girl. Nowadays girls have become very unpredictable. You never know what they need and when they need it. But I think yours is different!”, says Viraj.

“Not all girls are like that. Some are simple and nice enough to get along with. They don’t have the cocky attitude. Karishma is one of them.”, says Akash.

They are in a prom event. All the boys and girls dance together with a theme the night is based on. The room is surrounded by real couple and partners. Today the theme is old school romance. Akash is going to dance with Karishma. Viraj, well he is going to watch on his friend. And from the doors of the room, enters a beautiful girl, wearing a really pretty dress based on the theme of the night. That’s Karishma. Both Akash and Viraj look in awe.

“Man, she is actually beautiful. You grabbed an angel bro.”, Viraj whispers.

“I know just don’t mess it up please.”, says Akash.

Karishma walks up to Akash. Akash's feet are trembling and his hands are shivering. He is trying his best to hide his excitement.

“Hi Akash, you are looking really good. That new hairstyle is so much fitting!”, says Karishma. Her tone is sweet as sugar.

“Thank you, but it’s nothing compared to how gorgeous you are looking.”, says Akash.

“Aw thank you! I really wanted to wear this dress from a long time. Today is the right occasion. Thank you for inviting me tonight.”, says Karishma.

“It’s my pleasure. Well Karishma this is my buddy Viraj. Viraj, this is Karishma.”, says Akash.

“Hi.. nice to meet you. You both are looking mesmerizing! I will leave you both together, have fun.”, says Viraj.

"It's okay you can stay with your friend.", says Karishma.

"I will go and join my partner! Enjoy..(whispers into Akash's ear) good luck!", says Viraj as he leaves.

"Is he nervous about dancing with his partner?", asks Karishma.

"No no... I think he is just excited. Are you happy being present here, I mean I hope I didn't force you to come here.", says Akash.

"No Akash! I am really excited for tonight. But can I ask one question if you don't mind?", says Karishma.

"Yes please.", says Akash.

"Was I your first and only choice for prom tonight?", asks Karishma.

"Yes! I had no doubts about it. I knew I will bring you aboard tonight.", says Akash.

"Oh... why me, may I know?", asks Karishma eagerly.

"Ah... I trust you. I trusted you with the believe that I can do really well tonight in this prom, only with you. That's why.", answers Akash humbly.

Karishma smiles gladly, wraps her arm around Akash's hand, and takes him to the open hall adjacent to the room. That's the hall where all the partners will dance. Both look at night sky, which are garnished by the beautiful stars in the horizon.

"I am a girl, who always loves the night sky. Do you like it Akash?", says Karishma.

Akash goes for the first shot. It is the right moment.

"I do, but maybe I am looking at something more beautiful right now.", says Akash looking at Karishma.

Karishma blushes all the way. But she keeps gazing at the stars. Akash looks on. Meanwhile, Viraj is panicked.

"Where's the band?! We told them to be here by 7:30 pm!", says Viraj to the event manager.

"Sir, they won't make it I believe, they are stuck in a huge traffic at the highway.", says the manager.

“Now who is going to sing the songs? Just playing music will be boring.”, says a student.

This party had all the students from the university with their respective partners, the girls they were a friend of, were in relationship with and some of the boys brought their cousin sisters. Wow.

“What are we going to tell those couples outside?”, says another student.

“This prom is finished.”, says Viraj.

“No it’s not... there’s always a... Plan B.”, says Aarav, as he enters the room.

“Professor Verma! Sir... we are in a huge trouble. The music band will not be reaching anytime soon. It’s 8 pm and we need to start the programme.”, says Viraj.

“Well, the dance floor is set. The music is going to roll in few minutes.”, says Aarav.

“Who is going to sing sir? We don’t even have the instruments!”, says Viraj.

“Don’t worry, the musician is already here, who is going to sing and play the instrument.”, says Aarav.

“Who is it sir? Is it YOU!”, asks Viraj shockingly.

“Ah... just wait and watch. (turns to the event manager) Sir, can we have a mic, the music set and the lights on stage please.”, says Aarav.

“Sure sir! We will get it ready in five minutes.”, says the manager.

“(Calls someone on phone) Hey, get ready. Takeover the night.”, says Aarav.

In the hall, the lights go off. Someone arises on the stage, the footsteps could be heard. All the couples look towards the stage intrigued. The spotlight falls on the person on stage, and the dancers gasp out of shock!

“THAT’S THE POPULAR INDIE POP SINGER... *PREcious!!!!*”, says a student excited.

Perna is here! She is welcomed by huge cheers from the crowd in the hall. The young boys and girls go crazy seeing her on stage! Perna has become a pop singer, with the stage name *PREcious*, who has been streamed on multiple music platforms, done many shows around the country. That's what she wanted to be all this time. With a guitar, she stood in front of the mic and speaks.

"Good evening boys and girls... are you all ready for a beautiful night?", says Perna.

"YES!", says the young crowd loudly.

"Let's begin the show, old school romance, and it should start with the iconic song... *Pehla Nasha*.", says Perna.

Everyone cheers loud. Perna starts singing in her improved, soulful voice. The couples dance to the tune. Akash and Karishma are having the time of their life. The lighting is beautiful. Aarav joins in as the male voice for Perna, and the students surprised, yet welcomed their professor to sing with the popular singer. Little did they know, both were cousins.

After the show, everyone met Perna in person and took selfies and autographs with her. As the students indulge in dinner, the siblings meet.

"Hi Aarav! This was an amazing night.", says Perna as she hugs her brother affectionately.

"All credit goes to you. Thank you so much for saving the night for my boys. They had to make this prom a success.", says Aarav.

"It's you who planned it out. And by God's grace I had the time to make it here.", says Perna.

"And yes, did I sing well?", says Aarav.

"You stole the show! The moment you came on stage, that was your night.", says Perna.

"Alright pop star. You absolutely rocked it tonight! I am proud of you, you've come a long way.", says Aarav.

"So have you! How's your life as a professor going?", asks Perna.

"It's pretty well. I have these young boys to spend my time with, and miss you all a lot.", says Aarav.

"So.... do you miss... Aasna?", asks Perna a bit gravely.

Aarav gets silenced. He looks at Perna eagerly, but with a smile, he controls his emotions.

"Yes I do... and everyday I pray for her well being. Seems like that's all I can do for her.", says Aarav.

Perna is humbled by that answer. She can't believe how can her brother love a person so much. Suddenly Aarav's phone rings. It's Deepak calling him.

"Woah! What's up boy! Aaj meri yaad aa gayi.", says Aarav.

"Bahut yaad aa rahi thi teri... all I think about is you daddy.", says Deepak in a humorous, lustful tone.

"Shut up freak. How's things going for you?", asks Aarav.

"All is well here. Just wanted to check on you.", says Deepak.

"Well, my students had a prom tonight.", says Aarav.

"Wow... did you dance? With a female co-teacher? Woohoo!", says Deepak.

"Harami sala. I didn't dance, but sing.. with someone.", says Aarav.

"Who? Bata na bhai bata na!", says Deepak excitedly.

"Hear it yourself.", says Aarav as he gives the phone to Perna.

"Ae vedyaa... guitar ka string nikaal ke naa teri kaan main ghusa dungi!", says Perna. Aarav bursts in laughing.

"Iski maa ka! yeh toh wahan bhi pahunch gayi. Perna what are you doing there!?", asks Deepak.

"I was the singer at the prom. Had a great time.", says Perna.

"Wah... ab apne bhai ke paise bhi khaayegi yeh. Sahi hai. Keep singing. You must win the Grammy!", says Deepak.

"Yaar I don't want to talk to this shithead. Take your phone.", says Perna as she gives the phone back to Aarav.

"Han Deepak. Aur bata... how it's going?", says Aarav.

“Leave that, I have someone who I think you should talk to.”, says Deepak.

“Don’t! Let me watch the match!”, whispers Yash.

“Who is it?”, says Aarav.

“Hear it yourself!”, says Deepak as he forcefully hands the phone to Yash.

“Hey Aarav... uh... this is... Yash. How are you?”, says Yash.

Aarav goes speechless. He can’t believe he is hearing the voice of the man whom he didn’t want to hear. Yash is unable to find the words to talk. For Aarav, he is talking to someone who is living with the one happiness he always wished for. For Yash, he is talking to someone who is living a happier life than his, someone he certainly wished to be pushed into a dark corner. Both feel like they are talking to ones who got beaten in the competition of winning someone.

Deepak is not content with his job but unlike Yash, he doesn’t regret doing it. It will be interesting to find out who has helped him like this job. Prerna is on the peak of her success as an indie pop singer. The younger ones are having a good life. But Aasna's condition doesn't look fine and looks like everyone knows about it except Aarav. Let's see where this goes.

“U h... hi Yash. How are you?”, says Aarav hesitantly.

“I am fine, how about you?”, says Yash.

“I am good... its been so long.”, says Aarav.

“Yeah it has been. Life has changed a lot.”, says Yash.

“You never know where will destiny put you in the end. How's your life going?”, asks Aarav.

“Life is rough to be honest. Being a lawyer is very hard. Hats off to your father who pulled it out so well.”, says Yash.

“I can understand. I hope you are happy with what you are doing, that's most important.”, says Aarav.

“You know Aarav, I really don't know. The thought that I could have been doing something better, just lingers in my head. But I don't really hate to see where I am today. I am a successful lawyer to say the least. I am doing good. It's just that, this job just tires you physically and mentally.”, says Yash.

“That's true. I have seen Papa having sleepless nights when he was a lawyer. I can clearly get where you are.”, says Aarav.

“How about you? I hope you are nowhere near the tragedy I am going through.”, says Yash.

“Tragedy? More like aftermath of a tragedy. I am just going with the flow man. Bits and pieces of happy moments, not much.”, says Aarav.

“Are you okay? This doesn't sound good.”, says Yash.

“Don't worry Yash. Maybe I am like this. To be honest, I think I am missing all those moments I lived with you all. Staying away from the people who care about you is like a knife stabbed in the chest. I really want to live those days back sometimes. But it's not possible I know.”, says Aarav.

“Yeah, those were better times. We were young and full of hope. I never thought things would turn out like this. Life has a funny way of taking unexpected turns.”, says Yash.

"I think we all have those moments. We can't escape the what-ifs and the maybes. But dwelling on them too much can consume us.", says Aarav.

"Absolutely, and we both made our respective choices. Choices that led us down different paths. We can't change the past, as much as we might want to.", says Yash.

"True, sometimes, I feel I never wanted to choose this path. I should've stayed there, and lived a happier life.", says Aarav.

"Certainly that isn't the case with me. I was looking to settle down somewhere back then, and kinda doing the same as of now.", says Yash.

"I understand you have a tiring job, but you must be earning well and still not settled down? What's the matter Yash?", says Aarav.

"No, I meant... I think I still need to accept how this life is going on for me. It's just a bit difficult.", says Yash.

Aarav doesn't speak, but he gets concerned. Someone who hasn't settled down mentally in his life, how is he taking care of the people around him, especially Aasna. The moment he thinks of Aasna, Aarav's heart starts beating restlessly and his head starts aching hard. The former is normal, but the latter is something he deals with quiet regularly and he takes the medication for it.

Yes, Aarav has built a tendency for migraines in the last few years. He quickly sits down on a nearby chair and holds his head tight.

"Hey Aarav are you okay! Give me the phone.", says Prerna as she snaps the phone away.

"Aarav... is all good? I can't hear you.", asks Yash perplexed.

"Yash, actually Aarav has migraine, I think it's time for him to take his pills. We'll call you back.", says Prerna hesitantly.

"Prerna! Hey... okay. Take care.", says Yash.

"What happened? Is Aarav okay?", asks Deepak concerned.

"He has migraine. So a headache must have occurred. Man he doesn't sound to be happy. Am I the one to be blamed like? I think he still...", says Yash but stops.

“Thank god that’s just migraine. Well, I told you, Aarav hasn’t moved on. But I don’t think that affects him much. I think he is stressed out of work load. Aarav hated to do things that needed physical efforts back then. Maybe that’s why. Don’t think much about it Yash. Let’s watch the match.”, says Deepak.

“Alright, I trust you.”, says Yash.

Back here, Perna has asked for help from students. Viraj , Akash and Karishma all three of them are standing around Aarav. Viraj brought the medicine and a glass of water.

“Oh... ouch. I must have brought a pill with me. Thank you.”, says Aarav after taking his medication.

“Sir are you okay? Ma'am called for help, I heard it right away.”, says Viraj.

“I saw Viraj getting panicked, couldn’t get it and found you reeling hard holding your head. Are you feeling better sir?”, says Akash.

“Thank you. It feels good to have students like you all who take care of their teachers like parents.”, says Perna.

“They are my young bros Perna. They got to take care of me. Wait, who are you? You are not my student.”, says Aarav as he meets Karishma.

“Professor Verma, I am Karishma, Akash's friend. I followed him as he walked tensed into the room. We all were worried.”, says Karishma.

“Its okay. I have a tendency towards migraine. It’s common. Anyways, sorry for troubling all of you. Karishma, how will you leave?”, says Aarav.

“My brother will pick me up in few minutes. He is on the way.”, says Karishma.

“Akash you better stay away from her when her brother comes here.”, says Aarav.

Everyone laughs out loud. Akash hides his face as he laughs quietly.

“Sir, please don’t make it awkward for him.”, says Viraj.

“Yes. Alright, it’s time to wrap up guys. Karishma reach home safely, boys... get back to hostel in time. Good night.”, says Aarav.

"Yes sir. (Turns to Perna) Ma'am, thank you so much for being here tonight. You didn't just save this prom, but also made it even better than we thought. You're truly PRECIOUS!", says Viraj.

"Yes ma'am. I still can't believe that I am standing right next to you. It's a huge fangirl moment for me.", says Karishma.

"I hear you a lot. You're one of my favourites. Please keep creating the magic further.", says Akash.

"Thank you so much. I felt like home today. It was indeed special. Let's meet sometime again. This time, I want you all to be on my concert. Will you be there for the PREcious one?!", asks Perna.

"YES WE WILL BE THERE!", the kids answer her in a chorus

"Alright... let's leave now. It's going to be 10. Principal won't be pleased if you reach late.", says Aarav.

Akash escorts Karishma out of the building. Viraj greets his professor and the singer for one last time and leaves.

"Perna, I am sorry for this. I know I said I am going to work on this migraine. But it keeps getting worse.", says Aarav.

"I am not even caring about that right now.", says Perna.

"Then what are you looking worried about?", asks Aarav.

"You shouldn't have talked to Yash if you can't handle getting stressed out about it.", says Perna.

"Oh it wasn't him. We were having a good conversation, but when he said he is finding it hard to settle down mentally, I got worried about Aasna. That just triggered the migraine which I didn't expect.", says

Aarav.

"Aarav, just tell me the truth. You can't live with this separation from Aasna. You never ask about her, because you are afraid to hear something you don't want to. Have you resorted to the belief that Aasna is not going to be fine without you? What are you afraid about?", says Perna.

Aarav looks into her sister's eyes, doesn't say anything for minutes as he kept listening to her sister. He shuts his eyes close... and starts tearing down a bit. He walks up to a window and starts speaking as he looks outside.

“You know what Perna, wherever I am, whether its in open or the window, I look out or above into the sky... and just want go back to Aasna, either fly back to her or in a snap just see her happily smiling and looking at me, welcoming me into her arms, and hug her with all my heart. (closes his arms, fondles himself, tears flowing from left eye) Just keep hugging her unless my heart feels the warmth of her soul. That’s all my heart and soul wants, and it wants that feeling for life. I want to see Aasna dance happily in a rain or in the greenery of nature, just like she did that day in Satpura, because that was the happiest I ever saw her. Sometimes (wipes his tears), I just don’t understand why do I love her so much, but if I do... before my last breath... I want to be with her, when she is all mine. Aasna would be mine only, and I won’t accept anyone else. Aasna is all I ask for from this universe, because she is my whole world. That’s why... the only one from whom I want to know about Aasna is... Shri Krishna. He brought us together, he only told me to let her go. Yes Perna (turns towards her) I didn’t move on, I let her go. There’s a distinct difference between both the terms. But now, I want her to be mine... and I know that won’t happen. She is happy with Yash. I hope she is. She is.... right Perna?”, says Aarav.

Perna looks at her brother helplessly. She is so overwhelmed with the fact that how hard Aarav is loving Aasna. This is a kind of love everyone wants their lover to have for them. As glad she is about this, she feels gutted to realize that what Aarav wants to believe about Aasna, is not completely true. Aasna is going through her own set of challenges, which she is well aware about, but can’t say it to the man who loves her the most in the world. Perna walked up to her brother, holds his hands tight, and speaks.

“Aarav, things will turn in your favour. Just don’t lose the hope. And you don’t need to worry about her, someone takes great care of her, because he knows how much you mean to her.”, says Perna.

“Who?”, asks Aarav.

“Atul Kaka. He has become Aasna's second father in last few years. Both have grown a very close bond. He understands your feelings the most, that’s why he has vowed to always see her happy.”, says Perna.

“Is it true? Papa is doing it... because of me?”, says Aarav.

“Yes he does.”, says Prerna.

Aarav's heart blooms happily after hearing that. Suddenly his phone rings again. And to their surprise this is the call of the person they are talking about! Aarav quickly picks up his father's call.

“Hello, Papa! I was a bit busy today. Sorry for not calling.”, says Aarav.

“Its okay Aarav. Kaisa hai tu beta? Sab acha hai na wahan?”, asks Atul.

“Han Papa. Everything's good here. I was looking at your album, so I thought of you.”, says Atul.

“I miss you too. Really, I was just thinking about you.”, says Aarav.

“I wanted to talk about something with you, are you free?”, says Atul.

“Absolutely Papa! I am.”, says Aarav.

Atul is sitting on a sofa in his home. Wearing a kurta and pyjama, hair turned grey, Atul is in his 60s now. The picture he has his hands on the album... is of Aarav and Aasna when they were five years old during the trip to the mountains! Does he want to talk about Aasna with his son? Aarav is missing his beloved much more than expected. As he said, you love the person more when they are far away from you. Prerna brings it out of Aarav. He is concerned about Aasna's well being. Yash's condition just escalated that concern a bit. Maybe Atul is the one who is finally going to erudite Aarav about Aasna's well being. Are the dots connecting? Is this tale of love is going to begin again, or this is going to be another simple conversation between a father and a son?

“Do you remember Nitya? Your good friend in college?”, asks Atul.

“Yes Papa. We talk occasionally, we are still in contact.”, says Aarav.

“Well, she is getting married on the 28th of this month. I have got the invitation card.”, says Atul.

“My goodness! This is a beautiful news. I am so happy to hear about Nitya. Why didn’t she didn’t tell me about this?”, says Aarav.

“She sent you an e-card, perhaps you didn’t see it.”, says Atul.

“Oh yes she did! I was really busy today. I need to reply her.”, says Aarav.

“Is everything good Aarav, looks like you are having a hard time remembering things. How is your migraine?”, says Atul.

“Ah, the migraine is good and I am okay Papa, nothing serious.”, says Aarav.

“Will you be there in her wedding? That’s what I called you for.”, says Atul.

“Uh... Papa, as much I would love to be there.... I... I think... it will be difficult for me.”, says Aarav.

“Just ask for a few days of leave. I think they will give you one. And Aarav, for last eight years, it’s been me... who has visited you. You haven’t come here for ages, what stops you visiting your home for once?

Don’t you want to come back to meet your family and friends?”, asks Atul eagerly.

“No Papa, it’s not like that. I miss everyone a lot, I cannot explain how much. But, how can I say this.... it’s tough for me to go back for a reason.”, says Aarav.

“What is it Aarav, and if it is, why haven’t we talked about this already?”, says Atul.

“It’s because the topic of me going back was never talked about. Well, it’s deep, deep in my heart. It is this person, that once I confront her again, it will, bring me back to a place, I won’t be able to come out of.”, says Aarav gravely.

Atul doesn’t get it at first, but then... he looks at another image of Aarav, another image with Aasna, this time from the college trip. All the students are posing for the picture, Aarav and Aasna are standing together, the happiness can be read on their face. Now, as Atul introspects, he realises that both Aarav and Aasna aren’t in the best phase of their lives right now. He understands what Aarav wants to say.

“Hmm, it’s alright beta. Some things, are just meant to happen the way it has to. Accepting them can be very difficult, but as time passes, we need to get along with it. But in this case, it’s understandable why you are having a tough time accepting it. It’s really hard. I am still hoping your mother, to bring a cup of tea for both of us and she sits down to talk to me for hours. How amazing it would be right? But obviously, that’s far fetched.”, says Atul.

Aarav heard the last sentences of his father with a gladness on his face.

“It amazes me how much you love Mama. There’s a limit, but you happily ignore it. No wonder why I am in such a jeopardy. I am like you Papa.”, says Aarav.

He knew his father will understand his feelings, that’s why Aarav didn’t ask about how Atul got it.

“Are you blaming me for your terrible state? Iss baar aake dekhta hun tujhe.”, says Atul humorously.

“Nahi Papa I didn’t mean that. Mahadev ki kripa se sab acha hai lekin... the fear of losing her again, just lives rent free in my heart.”, says Aarav.

“Fear.... If you are a Bholenath bhakt, then why are you afraid? He waited millions of years for Maa Sati to return as Maa Parvati. If you are a Krishna bhakt, you should never be afraid, didn’t he teach us how following your Karma erases fear? What you can do is keep loving Aasna, do it, and when you meet her, she will be as much happy as you would like to see her.”, says Atul.

“Sometimes, even God is helpless. Shiva was when he lost Sati, Rama was when Sita was abducted, and Krishna was when he left Radha. I am a mere human.”, says Aarav.

“Love is like that. But this helplessness, is beautiful right? It shows how resilient you are in your love. Trust me, you won’t feel like this when time passes by.”, says Atul.

“Eight years have passed, how long Papa? Something just tells me, not everything is well. I don’t know how is Aasna doing... this hurts like a knife is being stabbed in my chest. I can’t take it sometimes, I just can’t. Going back, will either heal this wound, or will get more deepened.”, says Aarav.

“Aarav, so do you want to know about Aasna?”, asks Atul.

“I don’t even remember when did text her last time. How is she doing?”, asks Aarav.

“She is doing fine. She is living a life, in which she has her challenges, things she is going through and facing them bravely. She has her happy moments, all the people she loves are there for her. Aasna is always there whenever we need her. She has become our strength, for me, she is nothing less than a daughter. Thanks to Gaurav, our bond is as strong as it has been since your youthful days, I have been spending a lot of time with Aasna. She is always looking upon me, whenever she needs some advice or help, she remembers me. I happily give my helping hands to her. Her mother has her issues, but it’s fine. But Aarav, she needs some motivation.”, says Atul.

“Motivation? What does that mean? Isn’t she happy?”, asks Aarav eagerly.

“She is happy, but less motivated. There’s no one who can understand this better than you. She is giving us so much, that maybe, she is feeling lonely at times. But that’s not always the case beta, so don’t stress it. Once Yash gets a bit settled, I believe things will get better.”, says Atul.

“I knew it. But it’s okay. Yash is trying his best. I talked to him. Aasna will find solace soon. But is it really necessary for her to depend on Yash?”, Aarav retaliates.

“The fact is, as a couple, they both are dependent on each other. I mean, that’s how a relationship works, perseverance and patience.”, says Atul.

“Aasna doesn’t need to be the one to persevere. Nobody challenges their relationship. So why are they holding each other back? Yash is stuck in a profession he chose to do because of his mother’s will. But who is Aasna being patient for? Yash or... family?”, says Aarav.

Atul was astonished by how much his son cares for Aasna. He realised he has to control Aarav’s curiosity or he will regret hearing the whole story.

“Beta, all I can say is Aasna is trying her best to excel in life, keeping in mind that she might have to spend the rest of her life with...Yash.”, says Atul.

Atul squint his eyes when he called out his student’s name over his son. Aarav smirked, dejected after hearing that.

“Alright, it’s late, dinner done?”, says Atul.

“Han Papa, I had my dinner a bit early.”, says Aarav.

“Alright, go to sleep. Don’t stay awake and think about it much. Promise?”, says Atul.

“Okay Papa. I won’t.” says Aarav.

“Good. Talk to Nitya, congratulate her and decide whether you will come or not. Understood?”, says Atul.

“Yes Papa. Truly, I don’t think someone understands me as good as you. Thank you so much.”, says Aarav.

“It’s my job beta. Go and get a good sleep. Good night.”, says Atul.

“Good night Papa, take care.”, says Aarav.

The conversation between father and son is over. It was deep, Aarav finally knows some things about Aasna. Atul, thinks to himself.

“Do you think he will stop thinking about it?”, asks Vedika.

Atul visualizes his wife sitting on a sofa near him.

“No way. He is going think about it for the next 3-4 days. Aarav is after all, our son. I have been thinking about you for past 26 years non stop.”, says Atul.

“Sounds like ages. You don’t, but I see Aarav every day. It’s breaks my heart to see my son like this. There’s isn’t a single night that he doesn’t remembers Aasna and goes to sleep. The thing is, he goes to sleep with a heart in pain, eyes filled with tears that don’t flow, but helps his dry, constant fear of losing her everyday. Atul, do something about this. This will... this will leave him lost in his life.”, pleads Vedika.

“Vedika, I do want to help him. But I won’t be able to do a thing, unless he comes back. He needs to be here, and meet Aasna. Or else, things will remain like this.”, says Atul.

“If he doesn’t come, then bring him back Atul. Aarav has to. Aasna... Aasna needs him!”, says Vedika.

“You just said what my heart says. Aasna needs Aarav, she just doesn’t realise it. But she won’t, unless Aarav comes back for her.”, says Atul.

“You have to do something Atul. My son, he deserves the reward for his love, not these hard times... not these hard times.”, says Vedika.

“I will Vedika, I have to.”, says Atul.

Vedika held her husband’s palm tightly, which was still on the picture of Aarav and Aasna in the album.

“Yes Atul, those two people, right there, were born to be with each other. Make it happen.”, says Vedika.

Vedika vanishes, as Atul smiles, mesmerised by her wife’s words.

Atul looks at the pictures of his son, and finding him happiest around Aasna, just fills him with the inner urge to bring Aarav back no matter what. Nitya’s wedding is the perfect opportunity. Aarav needs a definite reason to come back, this is it. Atul realises how deep Aarav feels for Aasna, so deep that it reminds him of Vedika, who he assumes, to be more worried about their son than him. Deep down Atul feels, Aasna can only find solace with Aarav. Aarav doesn’t want to accept it because of Yash, but through Vedika, he solidifies his belief. Will Atul be able to bring Aarav back and make him meet Aasna? He has to... he has to.

“Aarav, I will leave. It was an amazing night. Please take care. I call you after I reach the hotel.”, says Prerna.

“Thank you so much for being here. And yes, I will do my best. Papa just talked about Aasna, Prerna.... I don’t feel good about this. Is she-”, says Aarav, but is interrupted by Prerna.

“Trust me Aarav, she is doing really well. And I am so sorry I didn’t inform you about Nitya’s wedding. He is such a pretty boy! Uff... anyways... why don’t you come to the wedding, and meet everyone, Aasna too.”, says Prerna.

“I will think about it. It’s too late now, you must leave. As long as you are in this city, let me know what you need.”, says Aarav.

“Sure thing. Bye bye!”, says Prerna as she hugs her brother for one last time before leaving.

“Have a safe journey.”, says Aarav.

Prerna waves and leaves the room with her guitar bag. Aarav packs his bag, he finds something down on the floor. It’s a bracelet with a design of “A & A” with a romantic theme. That instantly reminds him of the packed bracelet he held in the jewellery shop at the fair when he went there with Prerna, Yash and Aasna. Aarav had a really bright smile reminiscing the past, the days he was clearly living his best life. With no idea about whose bracelet it is, he takes it with him, in his pocket.

“It’s been ten minutes, where has she gone?”, says Yash.

He is sitting on a bench in a park, waiting for a woman. A lot of kids are playing in the ground. Some young and old couples, friends from all age groups, have surrounded the park. The atmosphere is busy but still pleasant enough to take some time out and do the conversation or activity you normally do in parks. Yash looks towards the park gate, and finally... coming out of an auto rickshaw, and entering into the gate... is Aasna. As she steps down from the stairs, she stops a kid hurtling towards the stairs. She tells him to walk cautiously, the kid

listens. She looks around, and finds Yash sitting right in the first bench visible as you enter the park. She gives a soothing smile and waves at him, he replies in the same

manner. Aasna walks up to Yash, and both sit down on the bench, Aasna sitting first.

“How are you Aasna? Its been a long time we have had a conversation like this. Feels good.”, says Yash.

“I am good. How about you? Have you been taking your naps well? I know you are having busy days of work, hope your health is not getting affected by it.”, says Aasna.

“I am doing fine. It’s tiring, but the pain leaves after some rest. And meeting you itself works like a painkiller! Haha... no seriously Aasna, life would have been a difficult trial for me in itself, if you wouldn’t have been there.”, says Yash.

Aasna smiles, but then squints her eyebrows playfully and asks Yash a question.

“I don’t get it Yash. What great I have done for you. Why do you thank me for just being there for you? It’s not like I have literally made your job any easier for you.”, says Aasna.

“You are the best thing that has happened to me. I will forever be thankful to you. Maybe I can’t give that favour back all the time, I am trying my best.”, says Yash.

“Have I ever told you or wanted you to do so much? It’s not the things you do to keep the bond intact, but your efforts to keep the love alive, that matters in a relationship.”, says Aasna.

“In today’s world, it might sound harsh, in this age, for a man it means the same. You put the efforts, the relationship stays alive. Even if you don’t ask for it, that doesn’t mean I won’t give it all for you Aasna.”, says Yash.

“You can make these efforts for yourself. You have already fulfilled your mother’s dream by becoming a lawyer. You have done enough for me for last ten years. Now it’s time you take care of yourself the most Yash.”, says Aasna.

“That’s certainly not the end. Is it?”, says Yash.

“At this point, I seriously have no idea. Maybe we will keep meeting like this. This feels the best part of my life as of now, anything more than this, I don’t want to think much about it, things happen when they should.”, says Aasna.

“Time will change that for sure. Are you still upset with what happened few days ago? It seems like it still hurts you.”, says Yash.

“It doesn’t hurt me. It’s definitely my fault. I am so directionless right now, it feels like, I am really not living up to her expectations.”, says Aasna.

“She is your mother, she will understand it. She will definitely comprehend and things will get better. And about you being directionless, just take it easy. Some way or other, you will find a way.”, says Yash.

“That’s what Papa says, that’s what your professor says. It seems like men can handle the hurdles of life way better than us.”, says Aasna.

“What do you think, what would a woman advice you in such a situation?”, says Yash.

“We are very oriented. I think we would like to find a way, rather than hoping for things to get better. And that’s where I am failing.”, says Aasna.

“You haven’t failed in life Aasna. And I really mean it, not saying just because I love you.”, says Yash.

“Maybe its not the right time, maybe it isn’t meant to be for me. I got into appearing so many entrances and competitive exams after college, which took almost six years of my life. I did really well in all of them.”, says Aasna.

“I know that phase. That’s when we started meeting as less as possible.”, says Yash.

“And now, something in my mind says, I never wanted to do this. In last two years, I have changed like four jobs, just because I didn’t feel like I fit in those kind of atmosphere. Then Mama said it’s not good for me to waste my potential. She started looking out for jobs that go

well with my aptitude. I became cooperative because she was putting so much efforts. But it didn't work out.", says Aasna.

"Hmm... that's sound tough. What does Gaurav uncle think about it? Is he also worried about it?", says Yash.

"He isn't that worried. You know he is a religious man. To him I am still that little Aasna who wants to do the daily activities with him, keep me engaged with him, talks to me about his work, and making me feel

that I deserve to know everything about his life. 'Pata hai Aasna aaj hotel main bada hi ajeeb hi banda mila' and the story continues. When I feel down, he makes me remind there's God who will help me out in such situations. He actually takes that care of me, which I really need.", says Aasna.

"Indeed, a great parent, an amazing father. Hope I had one like him. But no worries, as you said my professor, Atul sir is nothing less than a father for me.", says Yash.

"He is always there for me too. He is the first to help me whenever I am going through a bad day. Atul uncle is like a lucky charm.", says Aasna.

"Well, I talked to his son last night.", says Yash.

The floor swept away under Aasna's feet. The once she heard Yash say he spoke to Aarav, she stopped breathing for a moment. She looked at Yash with an eyes filled with eagerness. Yash looks at her puzzled. Even Aasna always wanted to know about Aarav's well being. But because of the promise Aarav made, both could never do anything about it. The difference is, Aasna had no time to really get to know about Aarav's life after leaving the city.

"Did..... did you talk to Aarav last night?", says Aasna.

"Yes. It was a bit awkward, but I think we had a good conversation after eight long years.", says Yash.

"What did he say? How is he? Is Aarav doing all right? How is his health? Is he~ oh.. my god... I am sorry.", says Aasna eagerly, but then calms herself down.

“Aasna... I can answer only one question at a time. Let’s start from the first one. Aarav was talking about how lives have completely changed from what it used be back then. He misses all of us. He wants

to live those days back, which he lived with his family and peers here. He is doing very well as a professor. He is settled... this is an understatement, he is more than that. But, he always feels a void, which he can’t explain... I think, it’s me who he can’t explain it. About his health, well he has a tendency of short term migraine, which gets better by his medication. Other than that, he is doing well. That’s all I know as of now. You miss him too right?”, says Yash.

“A void... an emptiness. What a silly boy. A big city... he should’ve found someone to fill that void. But he won’t.”, says Aasna humorously.

“This is not good for his well being. Deepak too said it, he hasn’t moved on. He should just leave it behind.”, says Yash.

“His life, his love... he has the right to decide. Not anyone else, not even me I guess.”, says Aasna.

“He might come here... for Nitya’s wedding. Aarav won’t be that same I guess. But sure he will feel better when he comes back. This will also be good for Atul sir, he misses his son a lot.”, says Yash.

“Nitya... oh my god.. yes she is getting married. Time passes so quickly. I am so happy for her. She deserves all the happiness.”, says Aasna.

“We will too... right? Yash weds Aasna. When will that card get printed... I can’t wait!”, says Yash.

“Yash... is it possible for you to skip those loads of court cases, skip almost three to four days, for a marriage, at this stage of your career?”, asks Aasna.

“Hmm... that’s the troublemaker. We will wait. You will do it... right?”, says Yash.

Aasna looks at Yash for a moment... then looks down, smiles, exhales and nods her head.

“Thank you so much. Let’s have something, I am feeling very hungry, would you like to have some snacks?”, asks Yash.

“Sure, let’s go.”, says Aasna.

The couple gets up off the bench, walks out of the park, and ride to a small restaurant where they can have some light food. This was quite a meeting. We finally can tell why Aasna has felt a void too, in

recent times. Her true aims in life have not been achieved that well. She is stuck between her goals and her feeling of emptiness. When she realises Aarav has felt the same way, she doesn't accept it. Perhaps she wants Aarav to be happy, content with his new life, we can say that by seeing how eager she was when she got to know Yash talked to him the previous night. Nonetheless, it can be seen that Yash and Aasna still love each other, with Yash being much more humble in his approach, but still far sighted as he is longing to marry Aasna, whereas Aasna wants him to be very careful about his career. Let's see where we go from here now.

“**S**haadi bachchon ki, naachenge hum. Kya bolta hai woh Anu Malik... aag laga denge aag! Haha...!”, says Varun

The three fathers, Atul, Varun and Gaurav are having a good time at Varun's house, with some tea and light snacks, like their college days. After the reconciliation eight years ago, these men have met many a times and spent leisure periods like this one.

“Arey, bachchon se kya matlab hai tera, will you arrange a multi marriage party of our kids? It's just Nitya's wedding.”, says Atul.

“Atul just check, if he has mixed some alcohol in that tea or something. He doesn't talk sense when he is drunk.”, says Gaurav.

“Varun Bhaiya, don't tell me. Again?”, says Atul.

“Uh... no its nothing. Hey don't take my cup.”, says Varun hesitantly.

“Let me check... (sniffs) Hai prabhu! Ye konsa wala hai? Smells like gutter. You will never change Varun.”, says Atul.

“It's not my fault! Tanuja never allows me to drink in my own house! Isliye aise pee leta hun jugaad laga ke. Haha!”, says Varun.

“That's what made me think why did Varun wanted a lemon tea today when he loves normal tea. You are absolutely sick man.”, says Gaurav.

“Aree chalta hai. This combination is amazing if you consume alcohol a bit. And Atul, don't you ever mind it brother. If he can have cannabis, then I can also drink alcohol.”, says Varun

“Oh... *Mahadev*, looks like you have forgotten what I told you years ago, remember what did I tell you referring to *Shiva* when I wasn't willing to take Gaurav's case?”, says Atul.

“What did you say? Must be something lame.”, says Varun.

“He said, *Shiva* drank poison eliminating the need for *amrit*.”, says Gaurav.

“Oh, so I am drinking vodka with lemon tea, eliminating my love for chai. Yeah!”, says Varun. Atul nods his head as he is amused by his brother’s words. Gaurav is chuckling.

“What’s the matter guys? That’s the point.... right?”, says Varun.

“Dear duffer, the message of this part of the whole *Samudra Manthan* story is the *Mahadev* will go to any extent to protect the universe. Just because we offer Lord *Shiva* the leaves of cannabis as a gesture to take away all our intoxicated thoughts in the form of these leaves, doesn’t mean he consumes it. Thanks to some modern social media *bhakts* who built this narrative about the God.”, says Atul.

“It also symbolises the great sacrifice of *Shiva*, for the betterment of the whole universe. That’s just great man.”, says Gaurav.

In all this, Tanuja comes in. She brings her cup of tea and sits on a chair.

“Aree.. you all have already finished your cups of tea? You should have waited for me!”, says Tanuja.

“No bhabhi, we are still drinking, only Varun has finished it.”, says Gaurav.

“Tanuja Bhabhi the taste in your tea is unbeatable, but doesn’t seem like Varun has felt that today.”, says Atul.

“Shhh! The both of you, quiet!”, whispers Varun.

“That’s why you have finished it that early, let me check, (takes a sip) hmm.. everything’s fine. What did you not like about the tea today?”, says Tanuja.

“Nothing Tanu! The tea was so good I drank it all in one gulp! Haha!”, says Varun.

“Oh really... what’s near your left foot? I can see it pretty well.”, says Tanuja suspiciously.

“Ah... nothing, it’s (pushes the bottle back, but makes it completely visible) nothing there Tanu!”, says Varun hesitantly.

“Varun... aapko kitni baar kaha hai ghar ke andar madira naa peene ke liye.”, says Tanuja squinting her eyes in anger.

“Tanu, sorry... please, I know you said not to bring it home but I couldn’t resist Tanu I am so sorry.”, says Varun.

“Why Varun! (stands up) I have told you so many times no to do things that creates nuisance in house and it’s norms.”, says Tanuja agitatedly.

“I am extremely sorry my love!”, pleads Varun.

“Aree Bhabhi...”, says Gaurav.

Atul halts him as both laugh silently watching their miserable partner.

“What sorry? You do this all the time and I am fed up of it!”, says Tanuja.

“Alright I won’t bring it in the house again. Okay?”, says Varun.

“That’s not the case! Why’d you do it even after so many years of knowing I follow my norms whole heartedly.”, says Tanuja.

The couple goes inside the house quarrelling about it.

“Wow, that’s a pair we all want to be in our lives.”, says Gaurav.

“Are you not?”, asks Atul.

“Not even close. We haven’t talked that much since that night.”, says Gaurav

“Hmm... it’s hard. I wasn’t able to digest it after I heard it from you. At least Aasna is talking to Garima right?”, says Atul.

“Yes they are, it’s pretty normal between them now. Aasna is helping her in daily households, both are occupied and keep talking about it and yeah, gossip about relatives, just women things.”, says Gaurav.

“Hmm.. that’s good.”, says Atul.

“Nitya is the first girl getting married from the generation of our children, this is remarkable.”, says Gaurav.

“Finally there’s a way all these kids can unite who have stayed away from each other for years.”, says Atul.

“Prerna is doing extremely well in her life, Deepak and Sarika are doing well enough too. Yash is working hard, will surely achieve his success, and Aarav, he is successful beyond words. Nitya will marry this well

settled Ayush, and will have better opportunities than what she is doing now. Only Aasna has been left out. And it's completely our fault.", says Gaurav.

"No Gaurav, now she will definitely focus on what she wants to do. Aasna has a bright future ahead of her.", says Atul.

"She needs a support system, and Garima couldn't give it. She thought just because her daughter is a brilliant student, she will be ready for high profile jobs. Well I knew what she wanted to become, but Aasna insisted me to listen to her mother's wishes. I agreed. But not anymore.", says Gaurav.

"Gaurav, do you think Aarav is doing what he always wanted to?", says Atul.

"What? Wait... Aarav didn't want to be a teacher? Then what did he want to do?", says Gaurav.

"He wanted to become a journalist. He wanted to interact with every single person in this world and know their life experiences. He always thought the world is a beautiful place we are living in. But it also has some ups and downs. Bringing those lives into his words and understand the world through other's perspective, he always dreamt of being something like that.", says Atul.

"Wow. What caused the change in his aims? From aspiring to be a people's journalist, to being a professor, what happened to Aarav?", asks Gaurav.

"Should I tell you the reason?", says Atul.

"Sure. Aarav is like my own son. Please say it.", says Gaurav.

"He lost the love of his life, when he left this city for the university.", says Atul.

"Oh... that's hard. He is just like you. Loving one girl unconditionally.", says Gaurav.

"The girl is.... Aasna.", says Atul.

Gaurav froze for a second. He couldn't believe what he just heard from his friend. From staring at Atul completely shook, slowly looking towards the table, then slowly gazing outside the gates of Varun's

house, and then again looking at Atul, it can be seen how startled Gaurav is. Atul replies to his astonishment by giving a smile and nodding his head, implying both of their children are feeling the same way, lost in their lives, the reason now is pretty evident. Gaurav nods his head, not agreeing with it, but accepting it.

“Atul... Aarav will come here, for Nitya's wedding. Right?”, says Gaurav.

“He is not sure. He fears that if he comes, he will again feel the same way about Aasna, and again he won't be able to do anything about it... because...”, says Atul.

“Because what? Say it Atul.”, says Gaurav.

“He would have to go back again.”, says Atul.

Atul decided not to talk about Yash's relationship with Aasna. He sticks to what he is talking about with Gaurav right now. Well, Gaurav knows about it. But he believes its just a normal relationship, not a serious one.

“I hope he comes back. We all will be really happy, and he will feel better too.”, says Gaurav.

“Aarav will, but he has to find a way how to deal with his fear.”, says Atul.

“Aarav shouldn't think things will remain the same when he comes back. Times change, the fate will also change.”, says Varun. He comes back after hearing the scolding.

“Ah... Varun did you hear us?”, says Gaurav.

“Yes and I already knew about it.”, says Varun.

“How? I didn't tell it to you.”, says Atul.

“Aarav's first ever friend, Prerna was crying a bit. She told me about his love for Aasna the day Aarav left us all, for a life he had to choose for staying away from this constant feeling of not being able to fulfill his love even though he is right there with her, loving her everyday.”, says Varun.

“Why didn’t I know about this! I could have said Aasna to understand his feelings.”, says Gaurav.

“Trust me Gaurav, Aasna understood and it couldn’t have been any better. She did what Aarav wanted her to do. But the destiny had other plans.”, says Atul.

“Destiny? What destiny? Aarav and Aasna, both are our amazing, god gifted children. They know each other since their childhood. They will be very happy together.”, says Gaurav.

“That’s the reason, they are not together, and even if they have to, they are facing these hard times, staying distant from each other. It’s only because they are our children.”, says Atul.

“So what? They are the children of those two parents, who have a very disturbed relation because something that happened ages ago doesn’t mean our kids will face the wrath of something that happened

between Garima and Vedika!”, says Gaurav.

“Hmm... the only way to fix this, is Aarav coming back, and meeting Aasna again. Both will eventually understand what they have been through all this time.”, says Varun.

“I have told him to let me know if he will come. I have given him the time to think about it.”, says Atul.

“The time is ticking away. Nitya's wedding is in two weeks.”, says Varun.

“He will... he has to come back... for Aasna.”, says Gaurav with conviction.

This was Atul's first move. He had to tell Gaurav first, about Aarav loving Aasna. Gaurav has all the right to be stunned because all this time he has been trying to understand what has made Aasna feel so lost in

her life. And after knowing Aarav is also going through maybe much worse, he feels overwhelmed. It can be seen how hard Atul is trying to change the course of destiny. Varun, though not serious with himself, again shows the maturity in contrast to his younger counterparts by letting them know the obvious solution to eradicate this misery which has come upon their children. Will Aarav come back? The fathers want to, but will he really face his ultimate fear?

Aarav sits down on his chair in his room, after a long day in the university. He is tired, so he sits down, and looks out of the window. He sees the weather is clear, and thinks to himself, that everything is fine on the other side. Little does he know that on the other side his closed ones are waiting for his arrival. He rises up and connects his mobile to his Bluetooth speakers, and switches to his preferred radio channel.

“Good evening everyone this is RJ Amar and I welcome you all to *Zubaani Amar ki... Geet aapki*. Tonight we are going to talk about “eternal love”. What is this eternal love? I asked this question to you all in our afternoon show and all of you sent your answers to my number. Thank you so much for participating! I will read out the first three answers and then give you my takes on the term “eternal love”, and also play a song which reminds me of the same. Let’s start, this is Rajesh Awasthi and he says... *“Eternal love is a blissful bond of two souls.”* That was indeed a blissful answer. Let’s see what this gentleman has to say... Sameer Sinha, he says, *“The unbreakable relation of the couple who goes through a lot of hardships is rightfully called Eternal Love.”* Wow Sameer that answer just touched my heart. The last answer is from..... Aasna Sharma.”, says the radio jockey.

Aarav stops for a second. He stumbles on his chair hearing this. He just heard the name of the girl he loves. It is Aasna!

“Let’s read this answer. This is a long one, hold your breath folks.”, says Amar as he starts reading the message sent by Aasna.

“Eternal love is a feeling that makes you feel distant from the one you are close to, yet it also makes you feel you are always close to the one you are distant from. Eternal love is a reminder that you will never lose your admirer, no matter how much this life has pulled your hearts away from each other. Eternal love is what keeps you and your partner together no matter what has caused the physical separation. Eternal love is the emotion of not only lovers, but every being in this world which breathes to live. Eternal love is that strength of yours, which the universe can’t surpass, the fate can’t defeat. If you love someone for eternity, you are the winner... you are always the winner.”

Aarav heard every single word of it. He didn't just hear it, he felt it. His ears couldn't believe what he just listened to. His heart is beating like never before, his mind is trying accept the fact these are the first few words he is hearing from Aasna after ages, his eyes are crying the most soulful tears filled with immense happiness after a long time. His face is garnished with a smile which can clearly express his subtle joy. Aarav is over the moon right now.

"Friends... this might be the best answer on my show till date. Even though it was long, I couldn't resist the urge to read something written so beautifully. This is unbelievable. I think we should assume this as the only definition for "eternal love". I am keeping this with me. This is special. This answer makes a romantic lover like me feel refreshed. Thank you Aasna, Sameer and Rajesh for these answers. Let's just switch to the song right away this time, because I have nothing more to say. The only song that comes to my mind after hearing these answers is this beautiful song sung by the legendary Kishore Kumar, from the movie Blackmail. This is RJ Amar and I will hear you after this song and a short break following it. Keep tuning in to *Zubaani Amar ki... Geet aapki* as I leave you with... *Pal Pal Dil Ke Paas.*", says Amar.

The evergreen song started playing. Aarav closed his eyes and started murmuring the song. His emotions are connecting well with this song. Aarav is just living the lyrics and feels the vocals is playing just for him. He is imagining himself as the man who is singing the song. After the first part... Aarav stands up and now literally acts as the main hero being pictured in the song.

Kal tujhko dekha tha..

Maine apne aangan mein..

Jaise keh rahi thi tum..

Mujhe bandhlo bandhan mein..

Aarav now walks towards the cupboard of his room, above which he looks towards a picture he has framed and kept it on the cupboard. That is him, and all of his friends from the trip he went with them eight years ago. His eyes gaze at the person he is standing beside in the photo, his dear Aasna.

Yeh kaisa rishta hai..

Yeh kaise sapne hai..

Begane hokar bhi...

Kyun lagte apne hai...

Mein soch mein rehta hu...

Dar dar ke kehta hu...

Pal pal dil ke paas tum rehti ho...

The last line hits him hard and Aarav smiles ecstatically as he is still looking at the girl he loves. He left his door open and Akash sees him doing the thing. Akash was watching it all with a glad grin on his face until Aarav noticed him. Aarav was surprised to suddenly see his student come at his door, but he expected him to be here because he had to submit an assignment. Aarav for a moment looked away from Akash with a coy of a smile on his face. But then he calls in Akash, shows him the picture he was looking at, and didn't say anything, just showed Akash the woman he loves. Akash was flabbergasted by the prettiness of Aasna, and felt petty for his professor for missing his lover so eagerly. But Aarav put his hands on his Akash's shoulder, and prompted him to join him in singing the song.

Tum sochogi kyon itna..

Main tumse pyaar karoon..

Tum samjhogi deewana..

Main bhi iqraar karoon..

Akash now starts singing.

Dewaanon ki yeh baatein...

Deewane jaante hain...

Jalne mei kya mazaa hain...

Parwane jaante hain...

Both of them now sing in chorus.

Tum yunhi jalate rehna...

Aa aakar khwabon mein...

Pal pal dil ke paas tum rehti ho...

Aarav and Akash shared a good laugh after singing the song.

“So I assume that’s your assignment.”, says Aarav.

“Ah... yes sir! Almost forgot about it, here it is sir.”, says Akash as he gives the notebook to Aarav.

“Hmm... good job. The answers are on point.”, says Aarav.

“Thank you sir. Sir, don’t mind if I say it, you are just like our principal.”, says Akash.

“Every man who loves someone for... *eternity*... is like this.”, says Aarav.

“I can understand, I am in the same line of lovers.”, says Akash.

“Emotional distance, have you ever heard of this term?”, says Aarav.

“Ah... no sir. What does this mean?”, says Akash.

“Then you won’t understand our love. The day I left this person, I didn’t just physically distance from her, but emotionally too.”, says Aarav.

“I understand I am not a lover who doesn’t spends everyday without seeing my beloved, but I definitely relate with the eagerness to be able to love her whole-heartedly.”, says Akash.

“You are eager because you are a young lover. We are not eager, we are just manifesting things. This image, the moment in this picture was also something I manifested. I think this all I had in my fate. But this is what I am going to live with and this will always remind me that I love someone for eternity, so much... that even though we are separated, we are together, all the time. What Aasna said... that’s her name if you didn’t know... it makes me feel, we are still close. We are still together.”, says Aarav.

“I don’t know what she said, but it definitely has given you a hope. And after this, sir do you really think you are emotionally distant from her?”, says Akash.

“What do you mean? Am I not?”, asks Aarav.

“Sir just think. This can’t be a coincidence that she said what you deeply relate with, if through some magical way she is seeing you missing and loving her to this day.”, says Akash.

“That’s true. But what if... what if... if...”, says Aarav.

“If what sir?”, says Akash.

“What if she is going through the same? I heard from my father, Aasna is a bit demotivated with life. Is she not being understood by her closed ones? This is not good Akash.”, says Aarav worried.

“Please don’t think that way. Maybe Ms. Aasna just remembers that you loved her, and might even believe that you still love her.”, says Akash.

“If she believes it, then I must go and let her know I still love her. And... and... no... I need to calm down.”, says Aarav

“Are you thinking of leaving this city sir?”, asks Akash.

“No, actually there’s a marriage of one of my college mates. This girl (points at Nitya in the picture) right here. I still can’t believe she is getting married. I am invited in the wedding.”, says Aarav.

“Oh... this way you can meet Ms. Aasna again! Sir... please don’t miss this chance.”, says Akash.

“I can’t Akash. I can’t. Aasna is still with Yash, her boyfriend from like past ten to eleven years, and it will be nothing but another heartbreak. I don’t want to feel that way again. This state of separation is still acceptable over her not being able to reciprocate the feelings I have for her.”, says Aarav.

“Sir didn’t you just say that she is not being understood by her closed ones. It’s maybe him who is not understanding her. Can you keep letting this happen? Please Prof. Verma, Ms. Aasna may not know it, but

she is waiting for a change... and that’s ... you! Please sir, go to the wedding. It’s the perfect opportunity.”, says Akash encouraging his professor.

Aarav was stunned seeing his student so much dedicated for him. He kept his hands on Akash’s shoulder and replies to his concern.

“No Akash, its really tough for me.”, says Aarav.

“Sir, it’s about everything you’ve been through all this time emotionally and mentally too. The main cause of your migraines is definitely this. Please, make the right choice.”, says Akash.

“I am so lucky to have a student like you. But yes, I have a lot to think, a lot.”, says Aarav.

“Think about it calmly. Alright sir, I will take the permission to leave. Sorry for interrupting you at this time.”, says Akash.

“No no Akash. It’s only because of you coming here tonight, that I understood the essence of what I heard from Aasna after eight long years. Thank you so much. Take care. Let’s meet tomorrow morning in the class. Good night.”, says Aarav.

“I am grateful that I could help you. Good night sir.”, says Akash as he leaves.

Aarav had a look of graveness in his face. The wish of reuniting with Aasna is not only growing in his heart day by day, but also he is getting closer to achieve it! He looks at Aasna in the picture again, this time with a hope beaming in his eyes. But deep inside he knows he is still far from really leaving the city to meet his love back again. Akash just encouraged him like the determined lover he is of Karishma, just trying to keep Aarav motivated. But this time, Aasna herself, through her answer to a question on a radio show, has ignited the flame of love and passion in Aarav's heart, even if it's little. But again his fear of feeling deserted due to Yash is eating Aarav from inside. He is not afraid of Yash but the destiny as it has been from the beginning, can he change this destiny? Will Aarav do what he thinks is not meant to be done right now? We have to see it!

“Get the flower baskets here my man bring them here! How many times will I say it sir? Who is going to walk under the stairs, Yoda? Keep it on this table.”, says Deepak.

The decorations are going in full swing. It's for Nitya's haldi ceremony which will happen shortly. It's 12 noon and it's total chaos in the hall, only for Deepak.

“Sir, who is Yoda?”, asks the man who brought the flowers.

“My father, is that a good answer? Now get to work man.”, says Deepak.

“Here are the chairs.”, says Ranjit.

Ranjit has grown up completely unrecognizable. With a long bushy beard, he looks like a different man. He brings a bunch of chairs stacked one over another.

“Thanks man... we used to arrange things like this for college functions and fests. Now look, we are doing this for an occasion we never thought about it even the slightest back when life was fun.”, says Deepak.

“True man, can't wait to see the girl with whom we used to work and roam around campus talking about all the nonsensical stuff, in that bridal wear. It's just nostalgic man.”, says Ranjit.

“Chal ab senti mat ho yaara kaam pe lag ja.”, says Deepak.

“Okay... Good to go chief!”, says Ranjit as he starts setting the chairs.

As Deepak walks towards another set of arrangements to be checked, he finds his another friend, but he isn't working.

“What is this thing... this right here... yes! This is a cup. What is it... a cup! No no don't touch it, it's hot... what is it? Yes... hot! Haha... such a cute baby aunty, you have got a sweet grandson.”, says Arun.

The famous Laila, now looks like an office clerk with short height, almost bald head and glasses on his eyes. But in real he is children's

psychologist. As we can see, he is playing with a baby who is with his grandmother, as he is drinking tea.

“You are too young to drink tea you little brat. Anyways, Arun I think you have a friend here who is waiting for you.”, says the aunt.

Arun turns around to see Deepak who is glaring at him, amazed.

“Hey Deepak, how it’s going.”, says Arun.

“Laila, what happened to your.... terrace man?”, says Deepak.

“Ah... how should I explain, just couldn’t stop it.”, says Arun regretfully.

“No worries, you can still grab women, look at your beautiful face, after all, tu har bhatakte majnu ka laila jo hai.”, says Deepak.

“Shut up man. We are too old for that joke.”, says Arun.

“Bro we are just twenty-eight. We aren’t even married. We aren’t old at all.”, says Deepak.

“Yeah, anyways why are you sweating so much?”, says Arun.

“Do you see the decorations in this room.”, says Deepak.

“Yes I do, it’s beautiful.”, says Arun.

“Who do you think has handled the most of it?”, asks Deepak.

“Is it you? Man... that’s marvelous! You look very eager to get married.”, says Arun.

“Wait, what has my decoration, or I must say my event management skills has to do with me getting married?”, says Deepak.

“I know you want to sit on that horse and dance to the tune.”, says Arun.

“That’s true. You should better think about your luck in getting married. I have kind of found my bride.”, says Deepak.

“Hmm... I know, it’s going to be memorable.”, says Arun.

“Alright Laila, just hold yourself together. You must help me a bit too, bring those boxes of water bottle here and keep it on that table at the corner of the room. Go get to work!”, says Deepak.

"Fine sir! Nitya will be grateful. When is the ceremony going to start?", says Arun.

"In an hour I guess.", says Deepak.

"Alright. Let's get it done!", says Arun.

"Thanks bro.", says Deepak.

A tempo arrives near the house gates. Two men are lowering down the food utensils. Deepak, and few boys from the family go down the stairs towards the tempo to bring the food in. With them, someone else joins to do the job.

"May I help you Deepak?", says Yash.

"Oh man! When did you arrive?", says Deepak.

"Just now. You seem to be working a lot. Let's give you a helping hand.", says Yash.

"Sure. It's just everyone doing their thing here. I am doing the preparations with some of them.", says Deepak.

"That must be the spirit. Where are others?", asks Yash.

"The boys are in this room either helping me or interacting with people. The girls are with Nitya, in her room.", says Deepak.

"Aasna is here too?", says Yash.

"Yes, Aasna is with Nitya and Prerna, she has come here with Garima aunty, who is sitting in the room talking to Nitya's mother, Prerna's, mine too and other women.", says Deepak.

"Sarika?", asks Yash.

"She will be here in awhile. She has an important seminar in a renowned organization, she will finish it and be here around lunch time.", says Deepak.

"Alright, that's good. Ah.. Atul sir.. Isn't he here?", says Yash.

"He said he will be present on the wedding day and reception. Gaurav uncle and Varun uncle will come for sangeet. It's good for him, how would he travel all the way from his home to this venue on his own. He is growing old. Aarav isn't here too.", says Deepak.

"Will he not come for this wedding?", says Yash.

"I can't tell Yash. He is a man of his own will.", says Deepak.

"His will... that one will who is crying loud to live with all of us... how would he not want to be here?", says Yash.

"Sometimes Yash, priorities are bigger than your wishes. And right now our priority is to pick up these meals.", says Deepak.

"Sure, let's go.", says Yash.

"You can bring the kulfi box, and I will bring this huge tray of jalebis.", says Deepak.

"Can you hold it?", say Yash.

"Yes sure... (picks up the tray)... there you go. To that third table at the corner.", says Deepak.

"Okay, be careful.", says Yash.

"Yup, so where were we... priorities. Yes, there are certain things we just can't leave behind. That's the thing with Aarav maybe. Look at you, you are also prioritizing your life over your wishes.", says Deepak.

"You know what Deepak, about me, I think I am losing the self interest every other day. It's getting tougher day by day running around in a crowd, where I don't recognize anyone. Sometimes... I forget which case I am fighting for which client. It's awkward, but it's only me who knows what's going inside. Everyday I leave the court after an hearing, it feels like walking back to pavilion without scoring a single run, giving zero contribution to my team, that would be my closed ones. It includes you, and everyone I know, from Maa to Aasna. Life has pretty much taught me to keep this small circle of people who know you and care about you. So it's not my priority, it's my duty to do this. But heck, it all seems wrong, something I am not meant to do. It's not just tiring my mind and body, but my soul too. I just have to...", says Yash.

He gets interrupted by three young kids, panting after playing and running around.

"Bhaiya bhaiya... please give us three kulfis, please!", requests one of the kids.

"Oh hello chota packet, you will get it after lunch. Not now.", says Deepak.

“Please bhaiya we are exhausted. Just one for each.”, says another kid.

“Who told you all to run around and create havoc? Go into an air conditioned room and take rest .”, says Deepak.

“All the cousins have reunited after so long, we must enjoy, but that’s the end. Now we need to refresh ourselves. Please let us have a kulfi bhaiya.”, says the third one.

“Just fetch a water bottle, that will help. Don’t get in our way now leave...”, says Deepak but gets interrupted by Yash.

“Deepak, let them have it, let’s not make them sad.”, says Yash as he keeps the box down.

“Yeah, it’s a family wedding for them. We are guests on rent lol.”, whispers Deepak.

“Here you go... (takes out three kulfi sticks, gives the kids one each)... one is yours, this one yours and here’s one for you. Eat it before it melts down. Now don’t run around because I can’t keep giving you kulfis all day.”, says Yash.

“Thank you bhaiya!”, say all the three kids and run away.

“Alright... (closes the lid, picks up the box)... now let’s go Deepak.”, says Yash.

“Truly, I don’t think the Yash eight years ago would have ever given those kids the kulfi like that.”, says Deepak.

“That Yash... though happier, had no idea what life had for him. I am glad he is much more humble now.”, says Yash.

“That’s an understatement, you are not only humble, but a person someone can always count on. I used to be so... it might sound bad but... so paranoid about you back then, because I thought you are in between Aarav and Aasna. As his best friend, somewhere I still think the same, but now just like myself and everyone else, we need to accept things the way it is. I am not subjecting myself to it, I really trust you and believe that with Aasna you can have a great life.”, says Deepak.

“What has really changed about me Deepak?”, says Yash.

“That you’ve realised that life isn’t about being the best, but being better of what you can be everyday. If a grape goes on to be ripe for

long, it shrinks and becomes dry. But that grape is a wonderful wine when fermented, and a highly nutritious meal when dry, what we call raisins, which helps our immunity. Like that, if times are hard, if it's trying to test you, it is making you a better person. Just go with the flow, you will be in the best phase in your life really soon Yash.", says Deepak.

Both keep their sweets on the table, breathe out as the task is done.

"Didn't known you were a motivational speaker Deepak. And how did you know raisins help in boosting our immunity?", asks Yash jokingly.

"Common science I guess, I know I am a bit dumb for that, thanks to the doctors on WeTube.", says Deepak.

"Haha... but on a serious note. All that part about waiting for the brighter days, keep working hard is understood. But how long? Nitya is getting married, Perna will be too, you and others... all will get married in few years. But when it comes to Aasna, I will again come up with the same answer. I need to get settled. I can't do this to her. But also, we have to be in the best state of mind for our marriage. It's getting worse every day for me, and with that... the inevitable thought dawns in... it won't happen anyways. We will never be called a married couple.", says Yash.

"Yash slow down! You are thinking a lot. Marriage for us, is a sacred bond. It happens when it should. Now look at Aarav, that guy has lost all the energy to fall in love again, but somewhere he must be hoping too, life will turn it's tide and finally listen to him. He keeps working with passion, that helps him cope up with this void. We must do the same.", says Deepak.

"Turning tides... that has never happened before. Let's see if it does.", says Yash.

"It must. Life must have some turbulence, warna hawai yatra karne kya faayda. Let's sneak at what the girls are doing.", says Deepak.

"We should not do that.", says Yash.

"Don't you want to meet Aasna? Come on!", says Deepak.

"Alright, I have to attend some calls first, I will join you shortly.", says Yash.

“Fine, will see you.”, says Deepak.

As Yash leaves, Deepak whispers something to himself.

“Tides... it will turn for sure Yash, and you won't be pleased, my friend.”, says Deepak.

The celebrations have begun. Nitya, the happy soul of this friend circle, is going to get married. It's the haldi function... and Deepak has worked tirelessly. But in all this, he let's us know how he has completely changed his view about Yash in years. The change is quiet significant in our eyes too. Yash has turned unpretentious, which reflects the hardships he is facing in getting his life on track, and he gets anxious to a level that he feels he is mutually separating from Aasna. Deepak made him realise it's not true. When talking about Aarav hoping for change in his life, Yash shows a mixed feeling of agreement and resentment. Deepak seems to be very motivated and adjusted to the situation, Yash isn't. What about Aasna? What is she thinking about all this? She must feel this too.

“This is the best set of jewellery I have ever seen! This is just for haldi, imagine what is saved for the marriage itself! I am feeling so jealous right now!”, says Prerna.

Prerna, Aasna and Nitya are in the changing room, where Nitya is getting ready to sit down for her ceremony. Aasna is applying the make up on Nitya. Prerna is helping Nitya wearing the jewellery.

“Like you cannot buy these. Come on... tell me... which earrings are the best out of all them. I will wear those.”, says Nitya.

“I would buy one good set and wear it all day. But I am really not good at choosing... how about this? This jhoomar will match your yellow saree so well.”, says Prerna as she picks up one pair of earring.

“I like it. What do you say Aasna? Should I wear it?”, says Nitya.

“Ah... I think you must go simple with smaller earrings, you are going to be covered in haldi all over your face and hands today.”, says Aasna.

“Why didn’t I think about it, I am so dumb. Prerna that black jhoomar will go with the saree too... it’s small and the saree has black border.”, says Nitya.

“You can cover your ears with the hair, yellow wala aaj hi acha lagega.”, says Prerna.

“It will work for the wedding day too. It will go really well with the golden dress.”, says Nitya.

“Yeah that can be done too. Aasna’s knowledge is best when it comes to getting dressed for occasions. I still remember how gorgeous she looked at a garba night years ago.”, says Prerna.

“It’s not like that Prerna, I want Nitya to look as pretty as an angel in the most beautiful occasion of her life. And about that... thank you, but you know well you are the most glamorous among us all.”, says Aasna.

“I am not buying any of that. If I was a glam queen, a king would have been taking care of me. But yes, right now the queen is Nitya, and her king is absolute piece of cake!”, says Prerna.

"Isn't that man going to be my husband? Someone already has eyes on him. I must protect him at all cost.", says Nitya.

"My romantic hits are enough to grab a young man's heart Nitya... no one is going to run out safely of that trap!", says Prerna.

"Haha Prerna... that's enough, don't turn Nitya's best day into a nightmare. I can't believe we all are still together, bonded so strongly, on an occasion like this.", says Aasna.

"Yes, I am feeling so blessed. Nitya I never thought you will get married. (gets close and hugs her) I am so happy for you!", says Prerna.

"I love you all. Thank you for being present on such a lovely event of my life.", says Nitya.

"We love you too Nitya.", says Aasna.

"Okay, I think she's ready, or is there something we have left out.", says Prerna.

"Even though Nitya is looking gorgeous, I think you should put a bindi, a black or yellow bindi will just be a cherry on cake.", says Aasna.

"Aasna, Ayush isn't coming to meet me today. I think I am fine.", says Nitya.

"Why would you look all beautiful just for your fiancé? We want you to keep glowing and shining like this all day, and also, someone must feel a bit jealous. You know... the true princess of our group.", says Prerna.

"Come on Prerna. She is a beautiful woman, she doesn't need to be jealous of me.", says Nitya.

Someone knocks at their door.

"I know that pretty well.", says Deepak.

"What the heck! You were hearing us?", says Prerna.

"Of course, did the boys just come here to do the arrangements? We came to meet our bestie who is going to become a bride!", says Deepak.

"How are you Deepak?", says Aasna.

"Great. After all its our Nitya's wedding.", says Yash.

“What about me and Aasna? Is Nitya the only girl you can see in this room?”, says Prerna.

“Prerna this is all about Nitya. It’s her day... her occasion. Why wouldn’t I be here for her!”, says Deepak.

“Get in. We are ready. Just a few things left.”, says Nitya.

“Look at this pumpkin flower right here, going to be dipped in turmeric paste. Wonderful!”, says Deepak.

“Deepak how bad your jokes will get anymore? Is there any stopping to this?”, says Prerna.

“No!”, says Deepak confidently. Everyone laughs in the room.

“Thank you for that earth shattering compliment Deepak. Thank you so much.”, says Nitya.

“No no no... on a serious note, you are looking so beautiful today Nitya. Have you ever looked this beautiful before? I don’t think so. Gorgeous!”, says Deepak.

Another knock at the door, its Yash.

“There’s my man. Look at her Yash. Isn’t Nitya slaying today?”, says Deepak.

“Slaying? Great choice of words. I mean... yeah... I wouldn’t answer that right now.”, says Yash subtly.

Prerna and Nitya chuckled quietly. Deepak realized the reason for that reply and bites his tongue. Aasna smiles, nods and said nothing. Yash just looked away, scratching his throat gently. This is a hilarious moment.

“No problem brother. We don’t need to give our queen a certificate for that, Nitya is looking beautiful today, at wedding she might send Ayush to ICU with her beauty.”, says Deepak.

“That’s enough Deepak. Don’t ruin her marriage lol.”, says Prerna.

“Alright, I will stop right there. The arrangements are almost done out there.”, says Deepak.

“Good job Deepak, I heard from one of Nitya’s sisters you were helping the family men in doing the arrangements tirelessly. Impressive.”, says Aasna.

“He is incredibly hardworking, as always. Well done.”, says Yash.

“Let’s acknowledge it, Deepak is the most helpful dude I have ever been around. Thank you so much my brother from other mother.”, says Nitya.

“Deepak you’ll never be replaced by anyone in our lives.”, says Prerna.

“Okay now stop! Thank you man. Tum log bhi toh itne ache ho, Prerna you postponed your show for Nitya’s wedding, Aasna is present here since early morning, arrived before any guest. And Yash, takes out time from his busy court schedules to be in our Nitya’s great wedding! Sarika will be here too, she just messaged me. We all are here for you Nitya.”, says Deepak.

“Except my good old brother.”, says Prerna.

There’s a sudden silence in the room

“Prerna, it’s okay. Aarav is my best friend just like you all. He messaged me two days ago. He is so happy for me. He really wants to be here.”, says Nitya.

“Will he be here by any chance?”, asks Aasna.

Everyone stutters as Aasna asked it so quickly. Aasna realized it and composed herself. Deepak for a moment turned his glare slightly towards Yash, and surprisingly, Yash had a grin on his face, showing how amused he was at her beloved for reacting like that suddenly. Yash looks at Deepak and nods his head to tell this was a bit humorous for him. Deepak gives a puzzled smile as a reply.

“I can’t say it Aasna. He didn’t mention anything about coming here.”, says Nitya.

“It would have been so good if he was here.”, says Prerna.

“Don’t feel that way Prerna, when we took out some time from our lives to be here, maybe he is there trying to be where he can be there for his loved ones in a much better place. Life is an unjust process of realizing that this is one time, one chance we all have got to get it done, to get it done the right way, that is the very purpose of life. Aarav might not be here, but he is with us, within us, trying to achieve that purpose every day.”, says Yash.

Everyone heard him with all ears open. In doing that, Yash left everyone shocked.

“Alright... now don’t talk like he has passed away or something. He is just in another state, miles away from here.”, says Deepak.

“NO!!!!”, Aasna screamed.

Everybody was death struck after that. Aasna revolted so loudly at that joke as if Deepak really meant it. Yash, though shocked, was not amused this time. It irked him that out of all, it was Aasna. Prerna had to break the mold.

“Obviously you had ruin the endearing environment Yash created.”, says Prerna.

“Endearing? That tensed the shit out of me. Yash sometimes acts like a sage, makes me concerned man. And Aasna... I am sorry.”, says Deepak.

“It’s okay.”, says Aasna, calming herself down.

“Didn’t you just give a lesson with grapes and raisins as your element? Looks like we all are in mid life crisis.”, says Yash.

“A life lesson with grapes... and raisins? What were you boys talking about?”, says Prerna.

“I know where’s your brain going. You will...”, says Deepak as his phone rings. He picks it up real quick.

“Hello, hey Sarika! Are you here... just wait (cuts the call) hey guys, Sarika's here. Let’s bring her in.”, says Deepak.

Deepak leaves to receive Sarika.

“From motivating Sarika to being her sidekick, they have come a long way.”, says Prerna.

“Shush! Don’t say like that... they are good friends who work together.”, says Nitya.

Everyone chuckled a bit. They know something about Deepak and Sarika we don’t.

“It’s so weird to realize where all of us are now in our lives. Even though so much has changed, something has kept us all together, it’s magical.”, says Nitya.

“Believe. You all believe madly in each other. You all believe that no matter whatever happens in life, we will stick together through thick and thin. If we are successful, we will celebrate the success together, if we lose, we will fall down in that well together. That’s the spirit of true friendship. I don’t know who has made that bond between you all so strong, but I realized it when I saw the people I trusted forgot me when they excelled in their lives. It was hard, but when I actually became a part of this circle of new friendship, I realized it’s true essence. I hope I have expressed this before but, thank you for accepting me however I was, and today, thank you Nitya, for allowing me to be a part of this momentous event in your life. Thank you. I really mean it.”, says Yash.

“Yash, you don’t need to thank us for that. You are a good human being, we knew you will find solace in our friendship. And we are glad that you are our friend.”, says Nitya.

“And also, Aasna trusts you so much, it’s no brainer for us. We believe you just the way we believe in each other.”, says Perna.

“I am glad to hear that, especially from you Perna. I remember you had no faith in me back then. It feels good that it has changed.”, says Yash.

“No issues bro. Where’s this Deepak gone? Sarika ke saath baith gaya kya khud haldi lagane?”, says Perna.

“Haha.. I will go and check it. Don’t worry.”, says Yash.

Yash leaves the room.

“Aasna, even I am concerned, is Yash okay?”, says Nitya.

“He is alright. As he said, mid life crisis. He is facing it for the last two years.”, says Aasna.

“That is concerning, don’t you think it is, Aasna?”, says Perna.

“It is, and every single day, it keeps growing for him.”, says Aasna.

“That’s normal for many at this age.”, says Nitya.

“But it’s still kind of worrisome. Can you do anything about it?”, says Perna.

"I want to do a lot as no one other than me knows what he's going through, but here I am fighting my own battles everyday. We both are sailing on the same boat.", says Aasna.

"Aasna, if it's taking a toll on you, please tell us.", says Nitya.

"It's absolutely fine. I mean, we both have decided to ride this sturdy boat together, and nothing is going to change that.", says Aasna.

"Time will heal all the worries you know. Here's you, trying to find a destiny, a Yash, who is feeling the weight of the "unjust" life he talks about, and then there's my sweet cousin, who is yearning hard to be his self again. What on world is going on?", says Prerna.

"We may not be in the best phase of our life, but maybe... they better one's are waiting. And I believe me and Yash will enter that new, fresh and better phase together.", says Aasna.

"I wish the same for Aarav. But Aasna, you are really going through this, and you believe you will see the light with Yash. That's so... how should I put that into words.", says Nitya.

"I understand it's not easy, but we have to make it. I will, Yash will... and Aarav, I wish he does too. Alright, I will just go and check with Mama if she needs anything. You two be here.", says Aasna.

"Okay Aasna, we will be waiting.", says Prerna.

Aasna leaves the room.

"Wow, this is such a strong bond of love between Yash and Aas..", says Prerna but she is interrupted.

"What kind of love Prerna? This is not at all good for Aasna!", says Nitya.

"What happened Nitya, weren't you happy about the courageousness in Aasna to face the challenges of life with Yash as they find to be in a successful relationship?", says Prerna.

"This is not courage Prerna, this is exactly what Aarav was putting himself through in those three years he didn't convey his feelings to Aasna in college.", says Nitya.

"What Nitya?", asks Prerna.

“To put yourself in a place where you can’t even decide what’s right or wrong to do in your love! If Aasna would have known about Aarav’s feeling before, Aarav wouldn’t have gone through those three years of feeling scared and less confident about his love!”, says Nitya.

“Yes, things would have been different.”, says Prerna.

“That’s how Aasna is feeling right now. She is not at all confident about her relationship with Yash, yet she is willing to be with him to the point, where maybe... maybe even he doesn’t find a way choose his love over his crisis struck life.”, says Nitya.

“It’s not going to be forever Nitya.”, says Prerna.

“What if it does? Is Aarav feeling any better after leaving everything for a life he just can’t live all alone? You saw it yourself few weeks ago, tell me.”, says Nitya.

“No.”, says Prerna.

“That’s why I chose to live a life with Ayush, who loves me so much for no reason. Loving is not always a responsibility, sometimes it’s a key to happy life Prerna, a happy life.”, says Nitya.

Prerna is left thinking about it. This is really deep. Nitya feels completely right in believing that Aasna shouldn’t sacrifice her happiness for a love that yearns Yash’s well being. Nitya stating the fact of choosing Ayush just because he loved her first is a reference to Aarav who loves Aasna unconditionally for no reason. Prerna is leaning towards the idea Aasna’s efforts to make her relationship a success with Yash, while wanting her brother to actually feel that way. Nitya opposes it strongly as she believes the other way. It’s an eventful day for her, Deepak being the most involved. Let’s hope this doesn’t affect the beatific occasion.

“Look at these notorious kids.. haha... they had a great time in the haldi, Nitya looks so happy. Glad to see her living the most beautiful moment of her life.”, says Atul.

Atul is watching all the videos and pictures of Nitya's haldi celebration in his phone.

“Everyone is applying Nitya haldi on her with love and care... this is beautiful. My Aarav would have loved being here. But his fear is not letting him come back to where he should be. What is that one thing that

bring my son back... what is it?”, says Atul feeling a bit disheartened.

As Atul is sitting on his sofa and looking up towards the wall, feeling disheartening about his son's absence, someone caress his head, trying to make him feel better.

“Don't worry Atul. There's a positive sign.”, says Vedika.

Its his wife again, Vedika plays with her lover's hair as she is here to hear his voices.

“How will our son come back to me, and have the woman who belongs solely to him?”, says Atul.

“I can see this Atul. This is the best thing that's going to happen to Aarav.”, says Vedika.

“Will he come back? Tell me Vedika!”, says Atul.

“Yes Atul, it will. Aarav will come here, and finally achieve his beloved.”, says Vedika.

“How Vedika? Who is going to tell him come back? Who is going to encourage him to win over his fears? Is it you?”, says Atul.

“No... it's someone who is alive, yet the only man who can help our son.”, says Vedika.

“Who is it Vedika? Ab paheliyaan mat bujhaao, keh bhi do?”, says Atul.

“Hai koi, jo tumhare tarah kisi ki har roz raah dekhta hai, even though that person isn’t alive anymore, just like me.”, says Vedika.

“Oh... he also faced the same fate as me in his love?”, asks Atul.

“Yes, and they weren’t even married. But to this day, she lives through him, just like you have kept me alive, in your heart.”, says Vedika.

“You are always there for me when I need you, this life is shorter than our love. Same is this man's story?”, says Atul.

“Just think, it’s even better. The world knows what he did to win his love.”, says Vedika.

“Wow... I hope whoever this man is, helps my son to get rid of his fears. May he let his love win.”, says Atul.

“Definitely Atul, not us... but our son will win this battle of love and fear, just like that man did.”, says Vedika.

Saying this, Vedika wraps her husband’s arm tight. Atul lets his wife keep her head on his shoulder. Both look out of the window, expecting their son to come back soon.

“Ladies & gentlemen, now it’s time for a show stealing performance! Are you ready?”, asks the host.

“Yes!”, says an excited crowd in an extravagantly decorated hall.

“Alright boys and girls, uncles and aunties, give it up for... Deepak!”, says the host.

Deepak makes his entrance on stage. The crowd applauds and cheers. Everyone is wearing ethnic clothes. This is Nitya's sangeet ceremony!

“Alright everyone please calm down... as some of you know... I am not going to dance alone.”, says Deepak.

“Looks like it’s a duet... let’s see..”, says Tanuja.

Varun, his wife Tanuja, Gaurav and his wife Garima are here sitting in the crowd.

“You know what that means.”, says Garima.

“If that’s the case, it can be only this one girl who is going preform with Deepak.”, says Gaurav.

“Some romance on dance floor... we need it! Remember Tanu, we danced in your cousin’s wedding...”, says Varun.

“Shut up! Watch what’s going to happen right now quietly.”, says Tanuja.

Gaurav and Garima share a subtle laugh. Varun is not amused as he turns his eyes towards the stage.

“Ladies & gentlemen... my partner in crime, my permanent head ache, but also my well wisher, my talented colleague and a wonderful friend... SARIKA!”, says Deepak.

Quiet a humorous introduction by Deepak, but people, mainly the young men, knew who is going to enter. They eagerly turn around to look at the red carpet. A catchy romantic track starts playing with appropriate lighting. Out comes, wearing a beautiful chiffon saree, her long hair wavering freely, flaunting her immense beauty with off shoulder blouse and a necklace adorning her neck, a completely gorgeous and confident Sarika makes her entrance. Young men in the seats are looking at her astounded, the four elderly guests acknowledge her proudly, Sarika's parents are blessed at their daughter’s dynamic presence, and Deepak offers his hand to welcome Sarika on stage, Sarika holds his hand and climbs onto the stage. Both give an iconic performance, as the love track was already a chartbuster, people enjoyed it. Deepak and Sarika have a striking chemistry together making the performance even better.

“They are pairing so well together! This is beautiful!”, says an ecstatic Tanuja.

“Indeed, that’s a perfect jodi!”, says Varun as he claps to the tune of the song.

“Gaurav, what is Aasna going to do? She said she had a performance too.”, asks Garima.

“She is going to have a duet singing performance with Perna.’, says Gaurav.

“Thank god. Phew!”, says Garima.

“Garima, it’s a merry occasion of Nitya’s sangeet, if Aasna would have sung or danced with a young lad, let’s say Yash, it would have been just a good dance performance not a prom night.”, says Gaurav.

“The occasion is different, motive would have been same, trying to woo my innocent daughter. I won’t let that happen.”, says Garima.

Varun goes yikes after hearing that because he also knows about Yash and Aasna’s relationship, thanks to his brother Atul. Deepak and Sarika finish their performance. The crowd applauds, which has completely loved this pair. The host takes over the stage.

“What an amazing performance by Deepak and Sarika! I want to be here all night and play the best tracks... but now it’s time for the real artist to step on the stage... please welcome... the *PREcious*... Perna! Joining her will be her best friend, Aasna! Big round of applause!”, says the host.

Perna brings her whole band in, she sits on a chair with her guitar which is slightly behind the first and centermost chair on the stage. Aasna takes on the lead of the performance. Normal guests were shocked seeing that, but the ones who knew about it were excited.

Aasna first starts singing slowly, and then the band starts it’s musical magic! It’s a rock love song, rock music combined with the sad romance. Another chartbuster but it was from Perna’s album, she sung the original version, but Aasna gives complete justice to it by her soulful voice, crowd is quietly enjoying the performance. Gaurav, Garima, Varun and Tanuja were extremely happy, as the men share a high five and the women held their hands in pleasure. Aasna seemed like to be in a different world, as she didn’t move an inch from her seat, keeps singing to the last note with her eyes closed. Perna plays the guitar with perfection, and others are playing their instruments really well. It was a complete vibe right here, as the crowd pull out their phones, switch on the torch and starts waving it merrily. As the performance ends, Aasna finishes with a long, effortless stretch in her voice, like she has been singing for years, Perna brings the intensity into her strings, and the lights beaming accordingly to the climax. The crowd gives a standing ovation to this performance. Young crowd cheers like they are in a concert, and the parents are just extremely happy. This was a show stopper.

“What a surreal performance! Perna, you are a legend! Aasna, absolutely nailed it! The drum guy... you were on a different level, and the saxophone man... how did you do it! The standing ovation shouldn't stop! Incredible!”, says the host.

“Our daughters made Deepak and Sarika look like junior actors in a movie. That was brilliant.”, says Varun.

“They were equally good. All of them are going to make this a memorable sangeet!”, says Tanuja.

“Can't agree anymore Tanuja Bhabhi. Who thought Aasna sung so well!”, says Gaurav.

“She should have started a singing career with Perna. Aasna is so good.”, says Garima.

“She will do what she loves. I am saying this for the last time.”, says Gaurav slowly.

Garima doesn't reply. Varun and Tanuja stare at couple quietly noticing their little banter.

“Alright ladies and gentlemen, the party shouldn't end. It's time for the queen herself to step on the dance floor!”, says the host.

The crowd knows who is the host talking about. Loud cheers resonates in the hall.

“So please welcome, with all her sisters, the woman who is going become our bride tomorrow, the very beautiful... Nitya!”, says the host.

Huge cheers and applauds fills the hall as the lights go dim. Spotlight falls on Nitya, as she walks to the front and centre, and one by one lights fall on her sisters as they stand behind her in unison. A wedding song with modern beats starts playing. The girls flaunt their dance moves with perfection. Nitya rules the stage not only with her dance but also with her facial expressions which are on point. The crowd showers their love through cheering for her. Nitya's parents are gladly watching their daughter perform. The performance ends with constant claps to the climatic tune, and then a huge round of applause for the bride to be and her cousin sisters. Perna, Aasna, Deepak and Sarika too cheer for their best friend.

“That was so blissful! Nitya seems like the main character of the story nowadays.”, says Prerna.

“She is indeed! Nitya is going to be happy in this marriage. I am really happy for her.”, says Sarika.

“Sarika, let’s not forget how you stole the show with Deepak tonight, I can’t explain how much you have impressed me.”, says Aasna.

“We may have stole the show, you literally owned this night! You were unbelievable Aasna!”, says Deepak.

“Now it’s the boys' turn. Let’s see what Nitya's younger cousin got, who is going to lead for sure.”, says Prerna.

All eyes turn to the host.

“The girls really showed us a beautiful performance. Now the boys are going to takeover the stage. Let’s welcome the bride’s young and energetic brother, the man who is going to lead the last performance of the night, please welcome... Nishant!”, says the host.

The crowd cheers loud.

“Alright folks, I know I am leading this performance of my brothers, but someone special is going to join us!”, says Nishant.

“Now what kind of surprise is this?”, says Prerna.

“Ab kaun bach gaya?”, says Deepak.

“This better be someone who will make this night memorable.”, says Sarika.

“I fear I know who it is.”, says Aasna.

“WHO!”, ask Deepak, Sarika and Prerna in chorus.

The brothers start their performance already. This song is a popular wedding song from 2000’s. Everyone knows this song well and cheer and applaud the powerful performance from the boys. Nishant is taking the spotlight like he owns it, but as the tune changes, from the back of the group, playing with his long hairs, and creating an exciting atmosphere, emerges Yash! Nobody expected him to be in any performance!

He shakes hands and hugs Nishant, and both dance as the lead together. The steps were so popular everyone started enacting it, and

slowly the crowd sitting also stands up and starts dancing to the tune. The hall goes lively with dance and singing. The children, the young men and women, the elders and also the older people celebrated the moment. Yash really hyped up the whole crowd to dance on the floor. Perna dances with Nishant, Deepak with Sarika, and Yash obviously dances with Aasna. Aasna just clapped her hands and stomps her foot with the tune. She seems happy, but not ecstatic. Gaurav from a distance sees it as he claps to the tune too. He couldn't understand why Yash and Aasna are so close, for all these years. Varun saw it, and deviates Gaurav's attention and dances with him. The atmosphere is truly joyous here.

Aarav stands in front of an idol of Shri Krishna and Maa Radha.. It's a small temple in his university campus. He joins his hands, closes his eyes and starts conversing with his God.

"O Krishna... please listen to me... this is for you.", says Aarav.

Aarav takes a deep breath as he continues.

"I met her that day in a temple, she seemed really eager... We talked about our friendship, and the love I have for her... Our love story was ending abruptly, as I was going to leave the city... I will remember how she befriended me, how well she trusted me. She prayed for my well being, I asked God to bring us together again... For I love her so much, I can't bear the pain. Eight years have passed, I am yearning to see my mate.. It was our last day together, can I change this fate?... can I change this fate? Please tell me... O Krishna... tell me in the name of your beloved Maa Radha... can I change this fate?", says Aarav as he got emotional speaking it.

He couldn't hold his tears. Aarav starts sobbing as keeps calling his God's name. Just behind him, Viraj stood all this time, listening to his professor's conversation with Shri Krishna.

"Radhe Radhe!", chants Viraj.

Aarav wipes his tears and sees Viraj praying to the God's idol.

"Hey Viraj! Visiting the temple at this time?", says Aarav.

“Sir... just like you, I come here every evening, to pray for my beloved Riya, who is residing with them.”, says Viraj.

“What a lover you are my man. By the way, did you hear me?”, says Aarav.

“Yes sir... I did. I know very well about your situation. Akash told me everything.”, says Viraj.

Aarav nods, realizing that if his students know about his love now, then he has nothing left to hide then.

“It’s tough, but still... I seek for answers, without any hopes.”, says Aarav.

“Sir, I think only one person can help you getting your answers.”, says Viraj.

“Will this person really give me my answers?”, says Aarav.

“Not only that, he will also clear all your doubts, and give you the not just the hope, but the strength to achieve what you are yearning for. Please go to him sir.”, says Viraj.

“But who is it?”, says Aarav.

“A man, who wishes to be with his love, to this day... like me. You know him well, he is right here with us.”, says Viraj.

“Like you... oh... understood. But he is...” , says Aarav.

Viraj holds Aarav's hands as he starts pleading to him.

“Sir, I understand who he is for us. But he is a human first, and then a man, who loves. Who loves someone... for eternity. He can understand your situation the best, and help you the most. Please Prof. Verma, you know, this is your only chance.”, says Viraj.

“Alright... Viraj, I will go for it. I think... I have to.”, says Aarav.

Aarav is finally making a move! He is willing to get back to Aasna. He wants her, it’s evident now. He is not completely motivated, but at least he is trying! The scene on the other side is filled with happiness. Joyousness has taken over Aarav's friends and his beloved at the moment. Aasna still seems to a closed box of mystery. We really can’t see what is she going through. Atul still waiting for his son eagerly, and Sarika's glow up is shocking and mesmerizing at the same time. So

much is going on here. But what needs to happen, that is Aarav coming back for his love Aasna, is it really happening? We will have to find out!

“Sir, sorry for disturbing you at this time, but may I come in.”, says Aarav.

“Mr. Verma, if you have come to my place at this time and in this rainy weather, it must be important.

Please come in.”, says the man.

He is wearing a black kurta and pyjama. He is an aged man. He is seen lighting the diya for two portraits in his room which has been garlanded. One is of a young beautiful woman and other is of an old man, with some valour in his face. The man paying homage to them is the principal of the university, a former music teacher, Professor Malhotra.

“Thank you Mr. Malhotra. I never meant to trouble you at this time, but it’s important.”, says Aarav.

“Please pray to these two pillars of this institution, and the most important people in my life first, as you stand here in front of them.”, says Malhotra.

“Sure sir.”, says Aarav as he prays the two deceased souls.

“Thank you Mr. Verma (turns around) uh... didn’t you have an umbrella? Why did you wet yourself in such weather?”, says Malhotra.

“Sir I was just too lost in thoughts that I couldn’t even realize its raining.”, says Aarav.

“Do you need a towel to wipe your hair? Wait a second.”, says Malhotra.

“It’s okay sir! Please don’t bother yourself, I am fine.”, says Aarav.

“Alright Mr. Verma, have your seat. I received your application for leave today morning. So you want to talk about it?”, says Malhotra.

“Yes Mr. Malhotra, and also something more than that.”, says Aarav.

“Well, let’s hear it. I know you want a leave Mr. Verma, talking about that is just not necessary.”, says Malhotra.

“So, Mr. Malhotra, it’s the hardest decision I am going to make. I thought I would never go back for this, but now I think I should.”, says Aarav.

“Are you going back to your hometown for long? Will you leave this place Mr. Verma?”, says Malhotra.

“No sir, the reason is little deep, related to something my heart has been yearning for years. I have a chance to have it.”, says Aarav.

“So that’s what you want to talk about, isn’t it? It’s about a love story, that’s incomplete.”, says Malhotra.

“Yes Mr. Malhotra. You guessed it right. The world has given me another chance to be with her. But our lives have changed so much, that going back just might feel like starting over all again, and the result, that’s the one thing that won’t change. That’s the reason, I am conflicted to go back sir.”, says Aarav.

“What is the result that you are afraid of Mr. Verma?”, Malhotra asks.

“Sir, this girl I love, Aasna... is in relationship with Yash. At this point, they are together for like ten to eleven years... that’s not going to change.”, says Aarav.

“How long have you been loving her... months.... years?”, says Aryan.

“As long as I have lived sir. Since the very day I saw her, when we were little kids, I have always wanted to know and explore the person she is. She is curious, and obviously, the most beautiful woman I have ever seen in my life, everything makes me love her to this day. Even today, I just want to know how she is doing, every single day I want to know that she is happy.”, says Aarav.

“That’s such a childish, yet such a beautiful trait of your love. You want to know if she is doing well, and that will give you all the happiness of the world. Ms. Aasna is lucky she has a lover like you. What about Yash? What makes his love win over yours?”, says Malhotra.

“I think, how strongly he believes that his relationship with Aasna will get better every day, the struggles both of them are going through in their lives will also get better. This believe is strong enough to make Aasna believe it too.”, says Aarav.

“Struggles in lives? Love is that one element that helps erase the dawning thought that is being burdened on you by your problems. How can you feel the pressure of your hectic days and sleepless nights, when you are in love? This new generation baffles me. We used to love unconditionally, so much that we used to forget all the worries, all the tensions. Love was just the only thing in the air for us.”, says Malhotra, getting quiet emotional.

“Old school, that’s the definition of that kind of love sir. That’s what we call it. I don’t know what kind of love I have for her. Loving her is the best feeling, yet not having her close to me is the worst I can feel.”, says Aarav.

“She is close to you Mr. Verma. Ms. Aasna is right there, in your heart. Don’t you feel that? I don’t even need to feel that way about the one I love. This woman (points at the portrait) still lives in my heart, and with me in this house, in this temple of knowledge, in this world, with me, for every single moment I breathe.”, says Malhotra.

Aarav is pleased to see this side of his principal. Seems like he loves this woman... for eternity.

“I do know if she is close to me or not. Aasna once said, eternal love is such a thing that makes you feel your love is closer when distant, and distant when close. I feel that way sir. But here’s the catch. The first and last thing I want in my life is Aasna’s happiness. And if she isn’t happy, which is what I strongly believe after hearing about her from my father and sister, it has to be me who brings back all the happiness of this universe to her. If no one can, not even Yash, it has to be me.”, says Aarav.

“Why is she unhappy Mr. Verma? What’s the cause behind her sorrow? Is it because of Yash, or her life itself is not going well.”, says Malhotra, a bit agitated.

“They said, she has her struggles she is fighting with. She is holding herself strong. I don’t know what or who is the reason behind it Mr. Malhotra, all I know is I have to erase this void in her life.”, says Aarav, sounding eager and restless.

“Then what is stopping you Mr. Verma?”, says Malhotra.

“Last time, I was so close to win her from the world which kept us close yet apart from each other for years. But the fate had other plans. I returned from a trip that day, feeling I achieved the one thing I had to in my life, the love I had for her is finally getting a chance. But the moment I returned. I got the news, that I have been selected as a student in this university. It was a huge moment for me in life as I got enrolled in one of the best universities in this country, but... I left her for this living this dream. I am content, but I missed her so much all this time, and when I realized she is feeling a void, yet the words she speak for love are hitting me hard, feels like, everything is a message. I would go back, I would have done it long ago, but then Aasna would again persuade herself to stay loyal to Yash, because she won't break his heart, moreover at this stage of his life, when he is striving hard just for his mother to be happy. No ones is winning here sir. The fate is destined. It can't be changed.”, says Aarav.

Prof. Malhotra smirks at his fellow employee, his eyes moved and reminisces how fate was once against his love

“Fate... this one thing was always against me too. This fate took my love away from me. It took everything that I could have been in life away from me. It almost took away the person I loved the most after this woman, that is her father, the one who laid the foundation of this institution (pointing at the other portrait). But somehow, I won this time. And today, you see me bestowing his position, the place where he was when I was fighting my battle with the unfortunate fate I had, when my love was with a war with this man's believe in harsh disciplines to lead a life with no regrets, when he was himself living with the insufferable regret of losing his daughter. I wanted to help him. I wanted him to know that his daughter, lives through me, and I am here, to fill that void in his life. Fate... has always played a crucial part in my life.”, says Malhotra.

Aarav's moist eyes beamed with curiosity, as he stares at his principal, wanting know what transpired with him.

“This is even harsher than mine. How did you change this fate Mr. Malhotra? How did you convince your beloved's strict old man that your love was always meant to reconcile him with his daughter, rather than

separating them from each other?”, says Aarav.

“The answer is simple. When the winds changed its direction, when the new stories of love succeeded in front of his eyes, when he realized even he can see his daughter if he feels her love for him, which is still alive... he changed too. He was convinced that fear can never win over true love... never.”, says Malhotra.

“The love won the battle against fear. You did it Mr. Aryan. You won the trust of your father figure! That’s why you stand as our mentor and leader today.”, says Aarav proudly.

“That’s true. That’s how you have to make your love win against your fears. And I know you can do that. You know that right?”, asks Malhotra.

“I do know it, but how I can I defeat that fate, that unacceptable fate I have been stuck with? I can conquer the fear by going back and starting it from where it all began, but the fate won’t change if Aasna stays loyal to the love she has for Yash.”, says Aarav, getting disheartened.

“I couldn’t accomplish this one thing in my love too, to win over my treacherous fate. Just imagine the one you love... dies because she can’t love you. She takes her life for her love has failed to win in this world filled with hate and fear. She dies... and you just couldn’t stop it. You couldn’t even see it coming. When I knew she was gone (looking at the portraits teary eyed) my heart crushed into million pieces. Everything, every person, this world itself just felt like a huge lie being told and shown to me. I wanted to be where my dear went too. But then... I thought of a man... a man she loved even more than she could have ever loved me. Her father, though strict and harsh to deal with, was the nicest human she ever had in her life. That’s when I knew, I had to dedicate my life to the second person I love the most, even though he never loved me. And I did it, life gave me a second chance too. I came back here, promised my beloved and the one you pray all day, that I am going to fill this place with love. When I succeeded in doing that, he also found his lost love, his daughter again, and became the nicest man she was talking about. He loved me like his own son after that, and then ten years ago, when he left for his abode peacefully, I was the one to pour his ashes down in the Holy Ganga, sending him

to his daughter peacefully. I hope they have reconciled and living on the other side as happily as I am today, as you could be, if you change your fate too.”, says Malhotra.

Prof. Malhotra turns towards Aarav with teary eyes, filled with utter satisfaction. Aarav stared at him with teary eyes too, eyes filled with immense hope.

“Your story is not only inspiring, but just the blessing and hope I needed Mr. Malhotra. You truly changed the toughest fate on your own. I wish I could have witnessed that saga alive.”, says Aarav.

“Many have seen it. Now it’s time for you to show how you change your fate that has made you live with this undesirable penance for so many years. Come on Mr. Verma, life has given you a second chance too, to change not just your fate, but your life.”, says Malhotra.

“Will my efforts change her heart this time? Will Aasna choose my urging love, over Yash's constant efforts to turn their lives better?”, says Aarav.

“If she needs that happiness and hope in her life of failed efforts and hardships, then you are the only man who can bring it to her Mr. Verma.”, says Malhotra.

“I will bring that for sure. But is it going to be enough, to really win Aasna from the world?”, says Aarav.

“Does she know about your feelings for her?”, asks Malhotra.

“Yes sir.”, replies Aarav, humbly.

“She knows you love her. You are doing it to win her love and also to give her all the happiness of life. She has to choose you over the man who is selfishly making her struggle with himself. She has to.”, says Malhotra boldly.

“I absolutely believe in that. Aasna is the most humblest, nicest, welcoming, lovable person I have ever come across. She has no right to sacrifice her happiness for anyone. She is not meant to resist, to find happiness with you when you are incapable of fix your issues. Aasna lives her own life and she must have her own happiness. I have to help her sir. I have to.”, says Aarav.

“Right now I hope you are friends with her. A friend must help their friends in need. They must tear the worlds apart for them. Just believe in that saying and your indestructible... *eternal* love for her. Go back to

your love, this is the second, and the last chance in your life. Go for it... go for it... **Aarav.**”, says Malhotra.

As Prof. Malhotra addresses him by his name for the first time, giving some emphasis to it by his voice, Aarav feels rejuvenated by his immense feeling of finally accomplishing what solely belongs to him. He smiles irresistibly and joins his hands, quietly thanking his mentor for giving him this ineradicable faith of winning his love. Mr. Malhotra, who feels immensely proud of the decision made by his disciple, grabs his shoulders with both hands. Aarav kneels down to touch the principal's feet, taking his blessing for the great deed he is going to do. Malhotra blesses the teacher, makes him stand up on his feet, puts a tilak on his forehead from the aarti thali, and hugs Aarav tightly, showing his belief in him. Aarav receives the hug sacredly.

This is a moment to behold! This is the greatest interaction of a mentor encouraging his disciple to commit himself to the task of his life, just after the historic interaction of the disciple Arjuna and his mentor Krishna. Will this finally make Aarav's long yearned dream come true? It has to!

“Arey bhai... this rain is only happening in the city, why isn't it falling here?”, asks Mohan

“This river used be filled with so much water, and now it's dry as drought. Our business is completely down Mohan bhaiya.”, says Raghu.

It's the two boatmen from Satpura village. After eight years, they are still working and earning by rowing boat. The village seems to be in deficit of water right now.

“Government officials are coming and crossing the riverbed by feet. Like give us some incentives, we still need to feed our family.”, says Mohan.

“By God's grace, our Ramchand is now working in a bigger post and is himself looking over the village as the Block Pramukh. We aren't scarce of anything. Just that we need this river to flow, or else... we are doomed.”, says Raghu.

“True. At this rate, authorities might think of shifting our settlements as they will make a dam nearby.”, says Mohan.

“No way we are leaving our motherland!”, says Raghu.

“Radhe Radhe!”, says an old man walking up to the men.

“Radhe Radhe Banke Bihari Ji.”, says Raghu.

“Aree kaka, aaj dal bhaat itni jaldi aa gaya?”, asks Mohan.

“No Dal Bhaat today, it's Roti Sabzi. We have to save the water for drinking and bathing.”, says Banke Bihari.

He always brings food for both the boatmen. Banke Bihari Ji is doing this for years.

“What a misery is this. How is Sirsa doing?”, says Raghu.

“He is not joyful as he was. He keeps sitting down for long hours walks only for grazing and taking his bath.”, says Banke Bihari.

“Is that a bad sign for us? Sirsa has been our lucky charm since those two youngsters brought them here.”, says Mohan.

“Hai *Hayasirsa*, please protect your Satpura. It needs you the most.”, says Raghu.

An unbearable grief sighs upon the three men as they watch at the dried up river. Mohan smiles, remembering Aarav and Aasna’s visit that day.

“Remember Raghu, that boy and that girl, were enjoying the scenery of the sublime nature that day while we took them and Ramchand to our village rowing this boat all the way. They wouldn’t be glad if they will be here today.”, says Mohan disheartened.

“I hope our Lord has kept them together. They really brought the best day of our lives ever.”, says Raghu.

As they kept talking and looking at the gutting situation of their nature, suddenly few drops started falling on the sands on the river bed. They looked up in the sky... the clouds started covering the horizon. The drops fell faster and in few seconds, it started raining heavily. The extreme displeasure turns into uncontrollable happiness for the three villagers as they have finally been blessed with showers.

“Oh my god! Finally it’s raining here in Satpura!”, says Mohan.

“Radhe Radhe! The river will finally flow with water, the farmers will finally be able to grow some food crops and cash crops too! And finally our Sirsa will love his bath and meal!”, says Raghu.

“It’s more than that boys.”, says Banke Bihari a bit gravely.

“More than this? Maybe its the kids who will have fun now!”, says Mohan.

“Bihari Ji is talking about something serious.”, says Raghu.

Just when Mohan and Raghu were trying to wonder about what Banke Bihari is thinking, from a clearing of the trees comes running to the riverside the ecstatic and merry horse Sirsa, running to and fro and neighing happily as it rains.

“Aree Sirsa rukja! Rukja mere lal!”, says the boy who came running behind to stop the horse.

“Sirsa is so happy, it is a great moment for us indeed!”, says Mohan.

“True Mohan, this village needed this shower of blessing from a long time.”, says Raghu.

“It’s happening! Mohan... Raghu... it’s happening! They are reuniting! They are reuniting!”, yells Banke Bihari as he looks straight into the vacuum in deep thoughts.

“Who are reuniting?”, asks Raghu?

“The ones who blessed our land!”, says Banke Bihari.

“Blessed our land? Who blesses our land other than *Hayasirsa Deva*?”, says Mohan.

“They blessed our holy land. They are reuniting! Jai Radha Krishna! Jai *Hayasirsa*!!!”, says Banke Bihari ecstatically as he looks up, closes his eyes and raises his hands joyfully.

“Whatever Banke Bihari Ji is saying is going over my head. What about you?”, says Raghu.

“Same here. (to Banke Bihari) Kaka let’s go back to our huts, or you will have high temperatures.”, says Mohan.

“Aree Mohan, our food is getting wet!”, says Raghu.

“Cover it! Let’s take it home! Kaka come fast!”, says Mohan.

Banke Bihari keeps bathing in rain as he is astounded by the thought of certain reunion, eventually walks back to village. Raghu takes the lunch covering it with his arms. Mohan helps the boy who was trying to stop Sirsa from running around, caress the horse and takes him back to the village.

Few moments ago...

“From today, you will be a responsible woman my princess.”, says Shweta, Nitya’s mother.

“Yes Mummy, I promise I will be happy and make you proud too.”, says Nitya.

“Nitya, it’s not just a day, but the most beautiful moment in your life.”, says Tanuja.

“Indeed it is. She is blessed with such a brilliant man. God bless you bachcha.”, says Jaya.

“Thank you Aunty.”, says Nitya.

“Hey don’t be nervous. Today, you are the boss! But seriously, this is a very happy day.”, says Prerna.

“Yes it is. I hope Ayush is going to be happy. It’s about him and his love for me.”, says Nitya.

“True it is. World needs more men like Ayush. He is so humble and trustworthy. I adore him. He will definitely keep you happy.”, says Garima.

“Yes aunty, thank you for the well wishes.”, says Nitya.

Prerna looked at Garima and wonders why does she think boys are not reliable.

“Alright, I think the groom’s procession is going to arrive soon. We must be there to welcome him.”, says Jaya.

“Yes we must be. Prerna stay here with Nitya. On our call bring her to the mandap.”, says Tanuja.

“Okay Mumma, I will.”, says Prerna.

Shweta pats her daughter on the head and leaves with the ladies.

“Garima aunty is so pessimistic! Sometimes I just can’t stand her.”, says Prerna.

“Why are you saying like that?”, says Nitya.

“Didn’t you hear what did she say... *World needs more men like Ayush* like he is alone the nice man out here.”, says Prerna in an eerie way but humorously.

“She appreciated Ayush that’s all. Haha..”, says Nitya.

“Let me call the list of boys she doesn’t trust, Deepak, Yash, Aarav... like Aarav seriously! My brother is the nicest of all the men in this whole world.”, says Prerna.

“And he’s the one suffering in his love.”, says Nitya.

“The world is cruel, isn’t it?”, says Prerna.

“No it’s beautiful. Just that it didn’t align with his wish. But he had a choice, do you know?”, says Nitya.

“What Nitya?”, says Prerna stunned.

“Prerna, the choice was, a girl who used to see him more than a friend for awhile.”, says Nitya.

“More than a friend? Who could it be? Wait a second... no... NO WAY! Nitya, is it true?”, asks Prerna.

“Yes, I was the one who always saw Aarav as the one guy who I just looked at and felt... well... he is adorable. I liked him so much that even after knowing about his love for Aasna, I fell for him. But he went to live his aspirations before he could have chose anything. And that’s how I once failed in love. Silly right? Cupid is such a foolish thing.”, says Nitya.

That’s a true shocker. The reason behind awkward reactions of Nitya whenever Aasna and him were close is finally revealed. Prerna couldn’t comprehend this.

“You are revealing this on the day you are getting married. Are you okay to live with it?”, asks Prerna concerned.

“Yes, absolutely. Why would I be worried about it? Things have changed so much now.”, says Nitya.

“What if Ayush ever gets to know about this?”, says Prerna.

“He already knows about it. When we were dating each other, I said this to him. You know what was his reaction?”, says Nitya.

“What was it? Was he angry?”, says Prerna.

“No, he was rather totally unmoved by it. He said- *it’s okay Nitya. Life’s all about learning from people around. Your little love for Aarav has certainly taught you to love without regrets. You gave me a chance to love you, and see where we are now. The person changes, feelings don’t. I am grateful that you love me with so much honesty. I am extremely lucky to have you Nitya. I promise, I will fill that little void Aarav left unintentionally, but also fill your life with happiness and love you have never imagined.*”, says Nitya with a sense of relief.

“Wow, that was unexpected.”, says Prerna.

“Yup, and that was the day I decided, I made the right choice by choosing Ayush as my life partner. Sometimes, the most uninvited people teach you the best lessons of life. Ayush came into my life with such an absurdity, but still managed to become so special to me, that now... he is going to become my husband. It's blissful, I am just feeling like the happiest girl on the world today.”, says Nitya as starts tearing up happily.

“Nitya... This is truly an eventful day isn't it. World is indeed beautiful, I hope it's the same to my brother. But nonetheless, it's about you. Just you today. Give me a hug!”, says Prerna.

Both girls share an affectionate hug.

“It's about Aarav's too. If it wasn't for his departure that I could have ever felt this confident in loving Ayush. Not saying it was a good thing, I miss him, but I realized this helped me so much.”, says Nitya.

“It's great that you're happy now, you deserve it so... what's that... I think they are here! I can hear the beats!”, says Prerna.

“I hear it too. It's time!”, says Nitya.

The groom's procession is here! Ayush's family members have arrived and are dancing to the beats of dhol and music played by the DJ! Coming out of the car, Ayush... the young NRI we were seeing being talked about... joins the dance of his baraat. He captures the spotlight with his moves, and dances in the middle of the circle created by his relatives and cousins. Though an NRI, he seems to be completely desi as he is not just dancing casually but with the hook steps of the Bollywood song. As he gets near the gates, Shweta puts a tilak on Ayush's head followed by Aasna and Sarika arriving with a plate of aarti and greeting the guests from Ayush's family. Yash, Deepak, Ranjit and Arun hug and dance with Ayush and then pick him up and bring him into the hall without his feet touching the ground unless he reaches his room. Atul, Gaurav, Varun, Deepak's father Rishi and Nitya's father Devendra greet Ayush for a split second and Ayush does a struggling *namaskar* as he gets carried away by the boys.

“What an incredible scene! Look at this energetic procession. The best scene in any wedding.”, says Varun.

“Rishi Ji, when is our turn coming to be in baraat?”, asks Gaurav.

“Hahaha... Gaurav ji, it's upon Deepak . He will choose his bride. What about Aarav?”, says Rishi.

“Ah... about him, he is the one who will decide. In his case, the question is if he will even marry or not.”, says Atul.

“Its alright. It would have been so good if he was here. But work first, no doubt.”, says Devendra.

Meanwhile, the boys come back leaving Ayush in his room and having a chat with him. They meet the mothers.

“Ayush got rocked lol. He didn't expect that welcome.”, says Ranjit.

“He was baffled as if we picked him up because he committed a crime.”, says Arun.

“And also... his footwear has rightfully been stolen by Nitya's sisters.”, Deepak.

“Joyous. What a day it has been already. These three to four days have been so good, a break from a rigged scheduled life.”, says Yash.

“It's been fun for all of you. Isn't it? That's a good experience.,, says Jaya.

“Yes Maa... it's been too much fun.”, says Yash.

“Get for yours too. Sabka number aane wala hai.”, says Tanuja.

“Aunty trust me, our weddings are not going to be as special as this one. This is the first one in our friend circle and we have had a blast till now.”, says Deepak.

“That isn't true. It will be special Deepak. Your wedding will be special, Aarav's, Ranjit's, Arun's, Prerna's, Sarika's, Yash's and Aasna's wedding, everyone will have a special day to tie the knot.”, says Garima.

“Did you hear what she did there in the last part Yash?”, whispers Ranjit into Yash's ear.

“Shut up man!”, says Yash softly.

Boys had a good laugh there, the mother's couldn't get it, but they shared the laugh too.

“Pandit Ji must have started his rituals. We have to bring Nitya, let’s be quick Aasna.”, says Sarika.

“Yes sure. Let’s go. Prerna must be with her.”, says Aasna.

Suddenly when the two girls were just near the steps of the verandah that lead into the hallway, it started drizzling from the clouds.

“Oh My God! Let’s get in Aasna! My make up will wash away! Ahhhhhh!”, says Sarika as she runs into the hall.

Everyone rounds up in the hall. Thankfully, the wedding rituals will take place over a small podium in the hall. So the marriage won’t be affected.

“Huff... thank god I didn’t get wet in that sudden rain.”, says Sarika.

She breathes out in relief as she reaches to the group of boys in the hall.

“Sarika are you okay?”, asks Deepak.

“Yes I am fine.”, says Sarika.

“When the Pandit Ji calls for the bride, bring Nitya from upstairs. Don’t be late. Okay beta?”, says Tanuja.

“Yes aunty. Me and Aasna will bring her with Prerna coming down too.”, says Sarika.

“That’s good but... where is Aasna?”, says Yash.

“Yes I didn’t see her coming with you. Where is she?”, says Jaya.

“Oh.. she was just behind me. Where did this girl go?”, says Sarika.

“My goodness not again! She loves rain. Aasna must be getting wet in it. Kab sudhregi yeh ladki? I have told her numerous times you may get sick!”, says Garima.

And Garima is right. Aasna is enjoying the little drizzle of rain as she looks up, closes her eyes, extends her arms to welcome the rainfall with open hands. She starts smiling subtly as the rain drops touches down on her cheeks, feels as if someone is caressing her face with love. She closes her fists after some drops of rain falls on the palm, as if she is holding someone’s hand tightly. Aasna turns around ecstatically where she is standing as if she is playing merry-go-round with someone. She embraces

herself firmly, as if she is hugging someone endearingly.

Suddenly, Aasna's eyes opens up, her smile fades away. She feels a strong presence around her, someone she feels she adores whole heartedly. Everything she did right now was because of the striking presence she felt of someone who is close to her. She looks down towards the gate. Aasna, who is breathing heavily with a feeling of full satisfaction, turns speechless. Her arms loosen at the sight she is seeing right now. She cannot believe what is in front of her eyes. She is gazing the one who's presence she was feeling all this time. Aasna is looking at....

Aarav!

He is standing right at the gate looking at his love of life enjoying the rain. Aasna is looking at Aarav astonished, as Aarav is looking at Aasna with a smile he has smiled the happiest. This moment is real! This was eight years in the making! Banke Bihari was right....

AARAV AND AASNA HAVE BEEN REUNITED!

Aasna, subtly keeps her feet ahead one by one, as she walks towards Aarav. Aarav also steps ahead, walking towards Aasna. Both looked into each other's eyes, asking numerous questions to each other silently. The years of worries and curiousness were being answered. As once youngsters, now grown up love seekers come close, both Aarav and Aasna share a smile, reconciling their souls again, and to leave a mark, Aasna rests her head on Aarav's shoulder. Aarav holds Aasna's head and pats her affectionately.

Both share a hug, consoling those two hearts which have gone through numerous upsets for years. The hug that was hugged partially in the temple that day, feels done completely today outside a wedding hall, how ironic! It's a moment Aarav has been yearning and writhing for long, a moment Aasna never expected. But what stands out is... this moment isn't real-

Aarav sneezes from where he is standing. Aasna wakes up from her imagination of embracing her best friend after years, and realizes this rain is getting the better off both of them physically. Aarav breathes in, walks in, calls in Aasna with him to rush to the veranda to get a relief from the rain, and Aasna follows Aarav's command. Aarav starts looking for a handkerchief everywhere in his clothing, finds it in the pockets of his trousers, lends it to Aasna. Aasna thanks him, takes out her own and wipes her face. Aarav did the same.

"Well... that's a reunion.", says Aarav.

"This... this is unbelievable.", says Aasna.

"I can't believe it too.", says Aarav.

"But I am... so happy to see you!", says Aasna.

"I am... you... you know.. I missed you a lot. Are you doing well?", says Aarav hesitantly.

"I am... How are you?", says Aasna eagerly.

Aarav just could say anything at this point. He just smiles, shrugs his shoulders and nods his head. He indirectly said that everything was just

pointless for him till now. This is it. This is what he is living for. This is all that matters to him. Aarav lives to love Aasna. That's it. Aasna got it, and looks down, with a smile on her face. Both look away from each other for the first time in this meeting years in the making, as the realization of that long resistance both had in their hearts kicked in.

"Let's go in. Everyone must be waiting.", says Aasna.

"Yes we must go in.", says Aarav.

Meanwhile, inside the wedding hall, there's a little panic over Aasna.

"Everyone please calm down! Let me see.", says Yash.

"Yes Yash go and bring her in.", says Jaya.

Yash walks towards the exit of the hall. As he walks on the carpet, he stops himself. He sees Aasna walking back into the hall. He is relieved to see Aasna walk into the hall. But he notices she is talking to someone. Aasna looks towards Yash, and her smile fades away, realizing the scenario what's going to transpire when Yash meets the one coming into the hall with her. Yash eyes turn curious as he smiles and looks towards the exit, just at the right side of Aasna. And in comes the man that sent shockwaves through Yash's spine. His smile turns into a look of shock as his feet freezes on the ground. Aarav wipes off his face with his handkerchief, as he walks in. As he brings his hands down off his face, the first thing he sees is Yash standing still, stunned by his presence. Aarav slows his pace as he walks towards Yash.

Both have come face to face after eight years. Aarav stands firmly, giving a vivid stare into Yash's eyes. Emotions are palpable. Aasna watches her both lovers sharing an intense stare down, and thinking as if they are fighting each other quietly in their subconscious minds. But the tense situation was diverted to a friendly welcome as Yash smiles gladly and hugs Aarav tightly, Aarav receives it happily. Everyone behind gasps in shock. They can't believe what they are seeing. The happiness in their eyes can be seen vividly. Deepak runs in and hugs Aarav like kids waiting for their parents to pick them up from day school. Aarav is almost in tears seeing his best friend after so many years. Sarika comes in and embraces Aarav fondly. Aarav now walks up to the elders. Tanuja is the first he goes to greet, his own aunt, but the one loves like his own mother. Tanuja can't even talk she is so happy, tears flow down her eyes, the eyes which clamored to

see her dear nephew for years. He then greets Jaya and Shweta, they were just happy to have him as they never knew him closely. Garima, who just lost her brain cells seeing Aarav back after so many years, didn't let her personal feelings get the most of her mind, held Aarav's shoulder and caress his face subtly. The mother at her heart was happy to see the grown man whom she knew since Aarav was a little kid.

The male elders are in disbelief too. Devendra walks in and welcomes Aarav with open hands. Both men share an affectionate hug. Rishi pats Aarav's back and welcomes him. Varun, a bit taller than Aarav, hugs his nephew by patting his head and resting it on his chest. Gaurav's happiness is uncontainable. He holds Aarav's face and kisses his forehead out of love for the man he believes could be his daughter's best companion ever. And then happens the unmissable reunion of father and son. Atul can't keep his tears down. He is on the seventh heaven. No one has been as eager to see Aarav come back as much as Atul has. Aarav is teary eyed too. It's true he has missed Aasna for all these years, but nobody can replace parents when it comes to missing someone close to you when you are away from your hometown.

Aarav's delight is immeasurable. Atul is so happy that first he joins his hands and thanks Lord Shiva for bringing his son back and then spread his arms forward to embrace Aarav. Aarav goes in, touches his father's feet, takes the blessings on his head, kisses the fingers which touched the holy feet of his father and stands up to hug Atul pleasingly. Atul is feeling relieved and happiest he has ever been. For a moment he imagines Vedika coming in and hugging her dear son from behind. Its indeed a beautiful feeling to have your child back home.

"How long did you make me wait. I am so happy you are here.", says Atul.

"I am sorry Papa. I knew I had to come back... I did. I have done it.", says Aarav.

"Now you won't leave unless you complete the task.", says Atul.

"Yes Papa. I won't.", says Aarav.

"Thoda apne Chacha se bhi baat karle bhatije.", says Varun.

"Aap toh jaan ho meri. Aapse bahut baatein hongi.", says Aarav.

"It's been fun without us right?", says Deepak.

"Yeah, life had a lot of fun with me without you all.", says Aarav casually.

"No Aarav, we've been missing you like anything.", says Sarika.

"Same here. I have wanted to be back so much!", says Aarav.

"Now you are here Aarav. You are here with us, nothing can be better than this for us.", says Gaurav.

"Thank you Gaurav uncle. I missed your meals so much there.", says Aarav.

"Welcome back Aarav, didn't expect to have you here, but there was definitely something missing in this wedding. It was your remarkable presence! So good to have you man.", says Yash.

"It's my pleasure. Good to see you after a long time... LLB Yash Kapoor! I am proud of you.", says Aarav.

"You are the richest of all standing here Aarav. Do you know that?", says Tanuja.

"Why are we talking about that Chachi, come on!", says Aarav.

"Don't be shy about it, it's good to see you achieving so much.", says Rishi.

"Thank you uncle, grateful to hear that.", says Aarav.

"Be careful, success is very uncertain. The more it comes to you, the faster it leaves you with nothing. A lot of people want to be where you are. You should be proud that you have reached at the Everest.", says Garima.

Almost everyone frowned at that, but Aarav did not.

"I have to prove a lot aunty. Whatever I have done or achieved till now, is because of yours and everyone's blessing. Thank you so much.", says Aarav.

In all this, Aasna stood behind everyone and kept listening to the conversation. Everyone is speaking well of Aarav. And that makes her very happy. Aarav, expecting Aasna speak in this conversation, looks towards her. She doesn't say anything, just smiles and nods her head,

showing her pleasure to have Aarav around after so long. Aarav smiles back, thanking her for feeling that way. This makes him feel happier than ever.

Pandit Ji calls for the groom to be seated in the mandap. Ayush is accompanied by the elderly women and the fathers, Devendra and Ayush's father Narottam hug each other and try to even pick each other up for some fun as a part of ritual called *Milni*. Ayush sits down with the priest and he starts chanting a Ganesh mantra for commencing the wedding process, as every puja must begin by praying to Lord Ganesh who resembles auspiciousness. After some mantras, Pandit Ji calls for the bride. Aasna accompanies Sarika to bring Nitya down to the mandap with Prerna and Nitya's cousin sisters. As they walk down the stairs, both Prerna and Nitya see Aarav is standing with male friends just near the mandap. Prerna couldn't believe her brother being present but Nitya...she left the group of ladies and first walks up to Aarav. Aarav walks towards her too so that she doesn't get far away from the girls. Nitya looks in Aarav's eyes, the very eyes she fell for when she was young, and hugs him before she could shed any tears. Aarav embraces her endearingly.

"Hey Nitya, it's your marriage... don't forget that.", says Aarav.

"Shut up! You will never realize how much did I miss you. Please be here for bit longer this time.", says Nitya.

"I will Nitya, I don't even know I will go back or so... happy?", says Aarav.

"I will deal with you later on.", says Nitya as she walks away. It's seems to be she is angry but she isn't. She is very happy.

Prerna gives a subtle fist on Aarav's shoulder.

"Ow, what are you doing Preru?", says Aarav.

"You love the idea of being the "uninvited" one, first me in your prom night, and now you in this wedding. Batana chahiye tha tu aa raha hai, I would have wore the salwar suit you gifted me.", says Prerna.

"Chota bhai hun... please maaf karde... another salwaar suit as a gift this Rakhi, deal!", says Aarav.

“Yaar I am so happy to see you!”, says Prerna as she hugs her brother tightly.

“Same here... and why wouldn't I come back, aakhir ek hazaaron nahi... laakhon main meri behna hai tu.”, says Aarav.

“Never use that line for Nitya.”, Prerna whispers.

“I would've never done that, but why?”, says Aarav.

“You'll know.”, says Prerna.

Nitya sits beside her groom Ayush for the ceremony.

“The way you ran off... I thought... Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jaayenge 2 was in the making.”, says Ayush

“Won't leave you. You have had enough fun in life, now it's time to suffer.”, says Nitya.

“If it's you, suffering is just the first over of a cricket match.”, says Ayush.

“How did I fall for a man with so bad pickup lines? Don't worry bro... I will teach you best pick up lines for the rest of your life.”, says Nitya.

“Fine bro. Now let's stop talking. We have to play merry go round seven times in few minutes.”, says Ayush.

“Meta references for the rest of my life. Wow. I love you so much dammit!”, says Nitya softly so no one hears her swearing.

The wedding rituals begin and both Ayush and Nitya are entertained by their friends and family well. The knot has been tied. Celebrations happen extravagantly. Everyone had their lunch very late because of the great time all of them were having. During *Vidaai*, the maternal side has a sea of emotions flowing. Nitya hugs her parents and Shweta cries a lot. Devendra tries to calm her down as she weeps, happily yet incessantly. Nitya accompanies Ayush to his car. Yash and Aarav stood side by side all this time. Yash gets closer to Aarav and says...

“You will witness this day soon my friend.”, says Yash.

“Sure Yash... I might be lucky enough to leave with the bride.”, says Aarav.

Both share a healthy smile after that little face off. That was something.
Let see where this goes.

Aarav is back!

Few days ago...

There is a hush and rush at an international airport. It's usual in a place like this, but this time it's a bit different. A crowd has come together in huge numbers to take a glimpse of someone. Cell phones are out trying to take images of this certain man. With some security, this man walks to the luggage counter.

"Please keep your luggage on the weight machine sir.", says an airport attendant sending people in for boarding flights.

A man with specs, costly rings adorning his fingers and a golden watch on his left wrist, wearing a blue coat and trousers with a white shirt, looking as rich as a multi millionaire businessman, keeps his suitcase on the machine.

"21 kilograms. Almost the limit. As always.", says the man.

"You can go in sir.", says the attendant, as the suitcase goes away rolling on the machine.

A police officer standing ahead checking the boarding passes comes up to this man.

"Sir, how do you get the measures correct every time? You predicted the stocks correctly too for this week in your last press conference.", says the officer.

"Officer, whether it's money or luggage, my calculations never go wrong.", says the man.

"Just for once. Isn't it?", says a young police officer at the luggage scanning counter.

"Hey you arrogant brat! Do you know who you are talking to? Ask for apologies right now!", says the first officer agitated.

"It's okay officer. I like it when young men have such guts. Just like I did. And he is Indian. You know well officer, we showed you such guts years ago", says the man.

“And we had to leave your country. Years later, our Prime Minister was Indian too. Times change.”, says the senior officer.

Looks like this is London Airport.

“We remember the guts you showed back then very well sir.”, says the young officer.

“Samar. That’s your name officer. Well, Officer Samar, I know you and many remember it. But do remember this too... when I flaunt that kind of guts last time, I paid a heavy price. Be careful young man if you fall prey to your pride.”, says the man.

After scanning, the other bag this man carried seemed clear. He was allowed to take it with him.

“Sure sir. Just like I allow you to carry your bag, please allow me to check yourself a bit, with this metal detector.”, says Samar.

“Go ahead officer.”, says the man as he stands on the pod.

“Please sir, I am extremely sorry for his audacity.”, says the first officer.

The man raises his hand and signals that he is not taking any heed of it. Officer Samar is done checking the man.

“You may go ahead, Mr. Aniket Rana.”, says Samar.

That’s Aniket! He is Garima's elder brother who was found guilty of money laundering around thirty years ago from the present day. He is super rich now and looks like he is boarding his flight. Wonder what this man has achieved after getting out of the jail, but definitely he has earned a lot!

Present Day...

“Heard numerous tales of you. Meeting you is like a dream come true man.”, says Ayush.

“I am so glad to meet you Ayush. I am quiet familiar with NRIs, so we will definitely get along.”, says Aarav.

This is the reception of Ayush and Nitya. A lot of people gathered, and extravagant decorations as always.

“I hope you are familiar with your OGs.”, says Nitya.

“I never forgot my real ones my bestie.”, says Aarav.

“Even I didn’t, look at my halfwit friends, they are having the time of their life. We never forget our best mates Nitya.”, says Ayush.

“Alright boys, stop messing with the wife. Don’t do your lectures here beta. Nitya, Ayush this one’s for you both.”, says Atul as he gives a present to the married couple.

“Papa, I am not taking lectures. Come on.”, says Aarav.

“You used to do it in college too. Once a teacher, always a teacher.”, says Nitya.

“Then it’s in my genes. The best law professor is literally standing here with us.”, says Aarav.

“Ek lagaunga kheenchke saale!”, says Atul humorously.

“Photo kheench lete hai Papa, thapad nahi.”, replies Aarav.

Everyone has a good laugh. Atul, Nitya, Ayush and Aarav pose for a picture.

“Well indeed he is the best professor.”, says Yash, who is entering the stage with his mother Jaya.

“Ah, Yash it’s your hardwork. I just did what I had to do for you as the teacher.”, says Atul.

“No sir, you are the sole reason behind my son’s success. And then there’s your son, epitome of what you define. (To Aarav) God bless you beta.”, says Jaya.

“Thank you so much aunty. Please take your place.”, says Aarav.

Aarav and Atul go down the stage. Yash and Jaya present their gifts to the couple and come down. They accompany the father son duo.

“So Aarav, how is your professorship in the university going on? Do you like it there?”, asks Jaya.

“Yes Aunty, actually I love it. The students here get the best education and facilities, and this institution believes human development is more important than academic prowess. It’s been the motto since our visionary principal, Prof. Malhotra has taken the initiative to lead this university to it’s best era. It’s great out there.”, says Aarav.

“I never asked you this, but why is it all boys institution? Why not co-ed? In this era, we don’t see such colleges or universities.”, says Yash.

“With the new techniques and methods of teaching, Mr. Malhotra believes in keeping the roots of the university alive. The university began with the tradition of imparting the knowledge of our culture and heritage to the men, who are to meant to lead the family, take care of all the institutions of society and provide the same knowledge to the upcoming generations. I don’t see it as a misogynistic approach to erudite only the boys with education and not girls, but it aims to build a society, with responsible men who will take care of our mothers, sisters, wives and children. That’s what our ancient Indian education was about. It’s a Gurukul in true sense”, says Aarav.

“That’s impressive. Following the roots is the need of the time.”, says Atul.

“A great university indeed. Would love to visit it once.”, says Yash.

“You are always welcome. Ah... Varun Chacha and Gaurav Uncle are there. Let’s meet them.”, says Aarav.

“Beta... I am meeting up with Garima and Tanuja.”, says Jaya.

“Sure Maa. I will accompany Aarav and Prof. Atul.”, says Yash.

Gaurav and Varun are enjoying the delicacies of the reception.

“Man did you try the Fish Finger. It’s amazing!”, says Varun.

“No non veg today. It’s Saturday.”, says Gaurav.

“How are you so religious? Anyways, the Paneer Tikka was good too.”, says Varun.

“Could have added more flavours. The Paneer Tikka's authenticity is in spices rubbed on it, not how long it’s cooked.”, says Gaurav.

“Alright, how about the Soya Sticks. I didn’t like it much.”, says Varun.

“If you found it a little harder than chicken in texture, it’s how it should be. Big chunks of soft, juicy pieces of soya, that’s what makes it taste good. The best one in starters for me.”, says Gaurav.

“I must not deal with a manager of a restaurant, 100+ outlets around the country. Let’s just enjoy our meal.”, says Varun.

“Hey look, it’s Aarav and Yash, with Atul.”, says Gaurav.

“Wow... let’s join them.”, says Varun.

He is thinking at the back of his mind how are Aarav and Yash getting along this well after years.

“Hi Atul, have the starters. Aarav and Yash, take your plates too.”, says Gaurav.

“Sure uncle. It’s been a long time I have had some good food.”, says Yash.

“Varun bhaiya, couldn’t wait for me right? Chote bhai ki koi izzat hi nahi.”, says Atul.

“The food is too tempting, grab your plate bro.”, says Varun.

“Sorry I couldn’t interact much yesterday, I reached here in the morning and then head straight to wedding. It’s really been a pleasure to be back.”, says Aarav.

“Let’s talk now, how do you live there? Have you rented a flat or something?”, says Gaurav.

“No uncle, when I was a student I did live in a guest house, but now the university has a building where the staff can live paying a quarterly fees of ₹25,000/-. So it’s affordable and comfortable.”, says Aarav.

“50k per year, that’s good. For a man who earns 85k monthly, it’s very convenient.”, says Varun.

“Varun... who told you to say that? Keep your mouth shut please.”, whispers Atul.

“It’s okay Papa. I mean, that’s expected from such a renowned university.”, says Aarav.

“Whoa, that’s like 40k more than how much I earn as a junior lawyer monthly. Congrats dude. I believe you are saving a lot.”, says Yash.

“Like, what more could I spend on? I go to mess for food or cook myself most of the time, my classes are at walking distance from where the place I live, so I ride on my bullet very less nowadays, so no petrol charges regularly. This is the first time I spent a little too much when I booked a ticket for the flight. So it’s not like I choose to but I save a lot of money automatically.”, says Aarav.

“You still have that bike? I miss that bullet so much.”, says Varun.

“Yes Chacha, I remember how you loved riding it sometimes. I fix and repair that bike sometimes on my own. So it still runs good.”, says Aarav.

“Ah... what’s going on there?”, says Atul.

He looks towards the entrance door of the hall they were in puzzled. A crowd is forming near the door.

“Let me go and check.”, says Gaurav.

As Gaurav leaves to walk towards the door, the four men wondered what could be the situation. Everyone in the hall starts wondering what’s going on. From a distance, Gaurav sees Narottam, Ayush's father hugging someone proudly, and when they are both done with the hug, his eyes couldn’t believe the sight it is seeing. The wedding cameraman and everyone is clicking pictures. Security is standing firmly at the door. Aniket is here! He is here in the reception! Gaurav goes in, Aniket turns around, and is immensely glad to see his brother in law after years. Aniket embraces Gaurav heartily, and Gaurav receives it happily but in disbelief. Narottam escorts Aniket towards the stage where Nitya and Ayush are

sitting.

“Oh my God! Mr. Rana, what a pleasant surprise!”, says Ayush.

“Ayush, I had to be in your wedding. Congratulations my boy.”, says Aniket.

“It’s great to have you here. (to Nitya) Nitya, meet this man, Mr. Aniket Rana. When I moved in to London for the first time, he helped me a lot in getting settled there. If I am living in London today happily, he is the reason behind. I also used to work in his firm in my early days, then left it to pursue what I really wanted to. (to Aniket) Thank you so much sir for being here.”, says Ayush ecstatically.

“If I am not wrong, are you Aasna's uncle Mr. Rana?”, asks Nitya.

“You are absolutely right Nitya. I am Garima's elder cousin.”, says Aniket.

“Wow sir, it’s so good to finally meet you in person. Aasna frequently talks about how you brought her gifts from abroad when she was young. She will be so happy to see you again.”, says Nitya.

"For a long time I couldn't see her, when she was born, hand missed many of her birthdays. But when she turned eight years old, I made sure I will be her best uncle. Well speaking of gifts, here's one for both of you. Wish you both a very happy married life.", says Aniket.

"Thank you so much Mr. Rana. This is amazing. Even Nitya knows you well. Let's capture this beautiful moment.", says Ayush.

"Yes we should. Please join us Mr. Rana.", says Nitya.

"Yes I will. Cameraman, this should be a good click.", says Aniket.

"Yes sir. Smile please.", says the cameraman.

The picture of the day gets clicked. As Aniket gets down of the stage, Aasna comes in, touches Aniket's feet to take his blessing, and hugs him tightly. Aniket kisses his niece's forehead affectionately. Then Garima, hugs her elder brother fondly. Meanwhile, Yash, Aarav, Atul and Varun are watching the scene unfold.

"Well, what a moment. The very famous business tycoon Aniket Rana shows up and how did I never knew he was related to Aasna.", says Yash.

"Same here Yash, this is unbelievable.", says Aarav.

"We knew it. We just didn't ever think of speaking about it.", says Varun gravely.

"Uncle you must have... Atul sir... what are you thinking about?", says Yash.

He sees Atul, whose seems completely shook by the sight of Aniket.

"Papa... are you okay? Papa!", says Aarav.

He pats his father on the shoulder a bit to bring him back to his senses.

"Ah.. huh Aarav... yes.. I know Aniket from a long time too. But it has been ages I have seen him. It's a surprise to see him here.", says Atul.

Aniket, after meeting a loads of people in the hall and greeting them, finally locks his eyes with Atul, the man who couldn't defend him thirty years ago. He has a grin with intent garnished on his face and starts walking towards the four men standing near the food stall. The emotions are palpable. This moment was never going to happen in million years but it has. Aniket is the core reason behind tensions within Atul and Garima. How is this going to affect the quest for Aarav to win Aasna?

“Atul... oh my man Atul... it's so good to see you after ages. Do you mind a hug?”, says Aniket.

“Not at all Aniket, it's a pleasure meeting you again. Lets embrace each other to remember this moment.”, says Atul.

Both men hug each other tightly, as if two brothers reunited after ages.

“How are you doing Atul, I missed you so much.”, says Aniket.

“You must've been missing me for all wrong reasons. But I am doing good. How about you?”, says Atul.

“I am doing well, and hmm... sometimes I might have worded something bad thinking about it, but now it doesn't bother me. Hello Varun, if I am right... you are Atul's elder brother.”, says Aniket.

“Yes I am, it's a pleasure to meet you sir.”, says Varun.

Varun being Varun, bows down and shakes hands with the ultra rich Aniket. Aniket receives the hand shake proficiently.

“May I know who are these young men.”, says Aniket.

“Ah.. This is my son Aarav Verma. And that's my former student now a practicing lawyer Yash Kapoor. Both are good friends of your niece Aasna.”, says Atul.

Aniket stumbled a bit after hearing Yash's name. But he composed himself, and remained normal. Yash noticed it, wondering what caused this reaction. He decided to greet him first.

“Good evening Mr. Rana. It's our immense pleasure to meet you. Aasna always talked about some Aniket uncle all the time, never realised it was you.”, says Yash.

“And the fact that you know my father so well, and he never spoke to me about you, although I know you, is really overwhelming. Feels great to meet you in person sir.”, says Aarav.

“Both of them are so respectful. That's some good upbringing. So Yash you are a lawyer. I don't have a great relationship with them, so never mind if we don't get along. And Aarav, what are you doing?”, says

Aniket.

“Mr. Rana, I am an assistant professor in Sociology. I just thought I should be back for this wedding.”, says Aarav.

“Great. If you want to invest somewhere, don’t feel awkward asking me. Your father knows, I am pretty well at this.”, says Aniket.

“The whole world knows how good you are sir.”, says Yash.

Aniket glares at Yash a bit gravely. Seems like he isn’t happy hearing that.

“Ah, Mr. Rana, he didn’t mean that way.... he genuinely appreciates the legacy you have now. Ah.... Yash, let’s take the meal for Tanuja and your mother to the table. She told me to bring it for her, I almost forgot. Let’s go. Atul, Aarav... I leave you both here. (hesitantly to Yash) Let’s go!”, says Varun.

“Alright sir. Ah... there’s Aasna with her friends. You must unite with your niece.”, says Yash.

“Fine, we will talk later on. Bon appetite!”, says Aniket.

Varun and Yash leave. Aasna joins in with Perna and Sarika. Deepak follows them.

“Where is Papa going with Yash?”, says Perna.

“Yash craves good food. We know that lol.”, says Deepak.

“Aniket Mama, meet my friends. This is Perna, a very popular indie-pop singer, and Deepak and Sarika, they work as counsellors for young aspirants.”, says Aasna.

“These kids are so vibrant when it comes to profession. I am baffled.”, says Aniket.

“Mr. Rana, I have been investing in the right stocks for so many years, because of your guidance. I am indebted to you sir. It’s great to meet you.”, says Deepak.

“You must thank yourself for taking the right steps. I am just predicting like pundits.”, says Aniket.

“Aasna, how come you never told us that you are related to Mr. Aniket Rana himself!”, says Perna.

“The reason is I didn’t visit much when she was young, perhaps trying to remove a stain in my legacy. I lost a lot, I hope I don’t lose this bond.”, says Aniket.

Atul looks down and grins quietly.

“Any relationship that is special, does not need the physical presence, but the emotional essence. Someone taught me this with some different wording, I can’t remember it right now. But it really means a lot.”, says Aarav.

Aasna looked at him curiously, she is remembered about what she sent to the radio show that day. She starts speaking in continuation to Aarav's words.

“That’s true, I never felt I was distant from you Aniket Mama, never.”, says Aasna.

Aniket looks at Aasna affectionately as she wraps her arms around his shoulder.

“This is surreal. That’s a lovely bond right there. And we never knew about it.”, says Sarika.

“They say this in commerce, *wiser the input, greater the returns*. That’s what we are seeing here.”, says Aniket.

“All it takes is one wrong prediction. Am I right Aniket?”, says Atul.

A tense stare down between the two elders happen.

“Kids, let me have some quality time with my old mate. You guys and girls, enjoy your time.”, says Atul.

“Alright. I guess we must catch up with our other friends. Let’s go.”, says Deepak.

“I’ll meet you afterwards Aniket Mama.”, says Aasna.

Aniket nods. All four kids walk away in unison.

“You still hate me. Why not? I gave you the most gutting defeat in your entire career.”, says Aniket.

“It doesn’t matter. I have earned more than that as a lawyer over that loss. I don’t need to think about it for the rest of my life.”, says Atul.

“Definitely the loss doesn’t matter to you, but what happened after that, that is a concern.”, says Aniket.

“It is indeed.”, says Atul.

“You couldn’t do anything to improve it. Could you?”, says Aniket

“I tried, but someone just doesn’t want to make things right. Well, I am a bit stubborn too.”, says Atul.

“Has it cost you in any way?”, says Aniket.

“No, Gaurav and I have a great bond. My son and Garima's daughter, that relation is special too.”, says Atul.

“What do you mean by special?”, says Aniket.

“They are good friends. But a bond, which might just have strengthened after a distance of years, should be special.”, says Atul.

“I will be surprised if Garima allows that friendship grow any stronger.”, says Aniket.

“We'll see.”, says Atul.

“All the talking alone? Seems like my best friend and my brother in law don’t need my company.”, says Gaurav patting on both of their shoulders.

“Not at all Gaurav, join us.”, says Aniket.

“I will be glad if you will be here.”, says Atul.

There is pinch of tension in every word they speak. Atul will find it hard to reconcile with his former client. Aniket is also trying to remind Atul about that fateful day, creating a constant rift between each other. He is simply toying with his past defendant. Gaurav intervened at the right moment. Meanwhile, Aarav, Aasna, Perna, Deepak and Sarika have taken some soft drinks and are seated on a round table in a big lawn outside the hall for some chit-chat.

“How the hell do you like this flavour? I should have taken a cola instead.”, says Deepak after taking a sip of his drink, which left a bad aftertaste.

“Good. You hate it means it’s great. I love it. So does everyone. Isn’t it?”, says Perna.

“Ah... yes why not.”, says Sarika. She doesn’t like it either.

“I can see it Sarika, you hate it. Thank god, someone feels like me.”, says Deepak.

“That’s true. Let’s be honest Perna, whether it be your obsession with Maggie or this coffee flavoured lagoon, your choices are mid.”, says Aarav.

“You remember what we ate at the fair, that’s long time back.”, says Aasna.

“I remember every moment I spent with you Aasna.”, whispers Aarav. Aasna blushes at that. She chuckles in disbelief, amused that this dude still loves her. She stares at him, and Aarav, stares at Aasna with the same smile he had years ago. Things really haven’t changed. This bond is so natural.

“So long, yet you haven’t changed a bit. What do you even like about me Aarav?”, says Perna.

“Your music. The best therapy to my ears.”, says Aarav.

“Thank you very much my precious... *PREcious* brother!”, says Perna.

“Wait a minute? What fair are you guys talking about? And I wasn’t invited. Wow!”, says Deepak.

“It was eight years ago, me, Aarav, Yash and Perna went there.”, says Aasna.

“Sarika, look, they had all the fun without me that day. Yeh gaddari kaaynaat janmo tak nahi bhulegi!”, says Deepak.

“Don’t overreact now Deepak. Have you forgotten we went to the fair last year?”, says Sarika.

“Yes... what a day that was!”, says Deepak ecstatically.

“When did this happen? I don’t know about this.”, says Perna.

“News to me too. Sarika, you were a shy woman back then, from where did you get the courage to go on a fair with this fella?”, says Aarav.

“Ah... I don’t know, it’s like... I am fine with him going out-.”, says Sarika.

“No need to answer that! Aarav, why do you think people can’t go to a fair with me?”, says Deepak.

“Everyone can. I would love to. That day, it was an instant decision.”, says Aarav.

“Alright guys, I am feeling hungry. Let’s have our dinner.”, says Deepak.

“Yes let’s go. I am hungry too.”, says Prerna.

“Come Aasna, won’t you have the dinner?”, says Sarika.

“After awhile, I am not feeling that hungry right now.”, says Aasna.

“Me too. I will eat after some time. Just had the starters, so my stomach needs a break.”, says Aarav.

“Fine, we’ll bring our plates here. Keep our seats.”, says Prerna.

“Sure. We will keep everyone’s seat.”, says Aasna.

Prerna, Deepak and Sarika leave for bringing their food.

“Aarav, did you really stay back because you are not feeling hungry?”, says Aasna.

“Yes... and also... what you are thinking, that too.”, says Aarav.

“I guessed it right. Well... Aarav, tell me this... where did you heard what you said to Aniket Mama referring to our lovable bond?”, says Aasna.

“Oh yes... I heard it in a radio show. I just returned after giving my lectures and decided to hear some music. That’s when I heard it.”, says Aarav.

“You must remember what you heard. Please tell me.”, says Aasna.

“So, it was that RJ Amar show, and I heard him call your name. I was staggered. I knew it was you. He then spoke these beautiful lines... *Eternal love, makes you feel your beloved is distant when close to you*

and close when distant to you.”, says Aarav.

“It was me. I am glad you heard it. Such a coincidence, I was hearing him that day, and when he asked this question, I just felt I must answer it.”, says Aasna.

“That’s amazing. Thank you so much. It was like... you were really speaking to me. For years I have missed you, sometimes terribly. It was such a relief to hear it. That well could also be the reason for me to come back, come back and do the one thing I love to do the most.”, says Aarav.

“What is it?”, says Aasna.

“It’s... (takes a deep breath, smiles) to love you.”, says Aarav.

Aasna really couldn’t believe it. She knew Aarav will say this, but she thought it would be very difficult for him to convey it. All these years, he must have loved her, but so hard, that Aarav would even stutter while conveying his true feelings now, speaks volumes.

Suddenly, fireworks lit the night sky above them, and they could see it as they were sitting in the lawn. These celebrations were for the newly wed couple, Ayush and Nitya, who enjoyed it as they had their arms wrapped and watched the light show. Everyone in the place loved it. But for Aarav and Aasna, this is a moment to behold. This is sweet and soothing. But soon after sharing such a beautiful juncture, Deepak, Sarika and Prerna joined them. Aarav and Aasna went back to drinking their drinks. Yash finds all of them and sits down too. He has no idea of the conversation between Aarav and Aasna, so he didn’t suspect anything. All of them spent the rest of their time talking and eating. The reception came to an end after awhile. Finally, all the wedding ceremonies are complete. Nitya and Ayush are now happily married. Aarav has come back to his former self, and Aniket is in the mix too. What has the new chapters of this tale has stored in for us?

“Dear Diary...

Sorry for this long break dear. I was really not myself. But you know me the best, you know everything about me since the first time I started writing these letters to you since the age of seven. Two years before this bond of letters began between me and you... I met this boy named Aarav for the first time. As much as I remember the best, we both stood near a cliff of those beautiful mountains, looking down towards a gift of mother nature, the beautiful village of Satpura. Then eight years ago from today, when we grew up, old enough to travel anywhere we want to, we crossed the boundaries and visited that little piece of magic on land, and to this day, I can say it honestly, I haven't been any happier till now as I was that day. That day, I realized something which I again got introduced to few days back, when the night sky lit with fireworks of love. But something was different this time... I think I felt it. For the first time, even though I know about it, I felt what this feeling was. It's mesmerizing, makes me want to live with it, but I can't. Aarav, the man who is now way ahead as a person in life, in his heart, is still where he was eight years ago. Seems like he lives and breaths for this one reason. How... how can you keep doing this? For eight years, without knowing what's going on in my life, how does he still manage to hold on to those feelings? And that's what scares me the most. The day he would know what I have been through in these years, Aarav might feel bad, like really bad. He may feel so defeated in his love for me, and I don't want to do it. Let's just say he loves someone else just like this, it's unbelievable. He should be proud, yet that's what stops him from feeling good about it. Aarav still yearns for his love to win. How will that happen? I can't leave Yash just like this, he is trying his best. I trust him and he would definitely not want me to lose it. I am again feeling that I am in this conflicting situation. All these years I tried to run away from it, yet it's back. Maybe... I am just overthinking. I know Aarav will find solace in someone who really deserves him. Right? I hope I find the answer. I will write this much today, meet you next time! - *Aasna...*”, pens Aasna into her diary.

After she writes down the note in the diary, she closes it and keeps it on the table beside her bed. It's night time and she is almost asleep. As she lies down, she is reminded of a mail she received in the afternoon. Aasna looks into her phone for a minute.

This is what the mail read:-

"Hello Aasna Sharma, Thank you for applying for the position of nursery teacher with us. We are glad to inform you that your interview has been scheduled for 12:00 pm on September 13th, 2030. Kindly note the interview details: 109, Block C, Evergreen Heights International School. In case of virtual interview, please join the Room app meeting link sent on your Whatschat. Interviewing Person: Mrs. Ritika Anand, Head of Department, Montessori section.

Please reply to this email if you have any questions or need to reschedule. We look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Shaswat Singh,

The Principal,

The Evergreen Heights International School.

Ph no: 8723460167.

Email ID: evergreenheights@netmail.com."

"This is great! But will it work this time? I will think about this tomorrow. There's a week of a time.", says Aasna.

She falls asleep. She cannot feel confident about it because of her past failures in getting a job. As the thoughts dawn on her mind and eyes close, she sleeps soundly. Winds go into her room through the window and play with her hair on forehead, revealing her subtle face which is in deep sleep.

Next morning...

"Garima, pass me the fruits.", says Gaurav.

"Which one?", asks Garima.

"I will have one from each.", says Gaurav, looking at the fruit basket on the table.

Both are seated on dining table for breakfast.

"You won't have grapes and banana, kal hi aapka sugar report high aaya hai.", says Garima.

"Alright high chief, as you say.", says Gaurav.

"That's what the doctors say.", says Garima.

"I will hear them, promise. Well, what a beautiful wedding it was. Nitya is truly happy, that's what everyone wanted.", says Gaurav.

"It's great for her. Let's hope Aasna has a wedding just like this.", says Garima.

"Before that, I want Aasna to get a job. Once she settles somewhere, everything's going to be alright.", says Gaurav.

"That's something which hasn't happen for the last two years. I don't know now what she is going to do next.", says Garima.

"Everything that's good, takes time Garima. (Looks towards a room) Ah, there she is.", says Gaurav.

Aasna comes out of her room towards the dining hall. Hair just dried as she bathed, wearing a nose piercing, she walks in looking completely fresh. But in her mind, the thought of the mail received yesternight resides. She sits down for her breakfast.

"Aasna, did you pray to Lord Krishna?", says Gaurav.

"Yes Papa, for what I have received, I had to.", says Aasna.

"What do you mean beta?", says Garima.

Aasna takes her phone out of her kurta pocket and shows the mail to her parents.

"This is the mail I got yesterday. I am happy. I think I should go for it.", says Aasna.

Gaurav takes the phone and reads the mail, is very happy. Then he shows it to Garima. To her, this seems below Aasna's standard. The amount of education she has done in past few years, it's natural for her to think like that. But Garima doesn't say anything, smiles looking at her daughter, and gives her the phone.

“Aasna, this is a golden opportunity. You shouldn’t miss it. You have told me forever, that you want to be a teacher. You must go for it.”, says Gaurav.

“But Aasna, would you mind thinking again?”, says Garima.

“We already had this conversation Garima. Do we not know how it went?”, says Gaurav.

“Calm down, I am talking to her Gaurav. Will you do it Aasna? I would love to see you grow as a teacher, starting from nursery till becoming a teacher in elementary standard, that’s really good. But...!”, says Garima.

Aasna breathes in speak, but someone interrupts her at the main door, which was open because it’s quite early in the morning.

“I don’t think she needs to think much.”, says Aarav.

Aarav is standing at the entrance. He is welcomed in by Gaurav, as he unties his shoes, keeps it gently on floor, and walks in. Wearing a dark blue shirt, sleeves folded to his shoulders and black trousers below held together by a brown leather belt, watch on his left wrist and a wrist band on right, Aarav is dressed like he would go out on work, but that’s just his casual choice.

“So early in the morning, that’s a good surprise. Please be seated Aarav.”, says Gaurav.

“Thank you uncle. Ah... where is Mr. Rana?”, says Aarav.

“He has gone for a walk. He will come back in some time.”, says Gaurav.

“You are here at the right time, come have breakfast with us. Aasna, take that plate and serve him the poha.”, says Garima.

“No aunty it’s okay! I just had it at Prerna’s place. I thought I must meet everyone a bit early in the morning, because I have plans with Deepak and his friends Ranjit and Arun for an outing in the noon.”, says Aarav.

“A little bit of poha won’t explode your tummy, have it.”, says Aasna.

“Alright, and I can’t deny the famous Indori Poha. Please.”, says Aarav as Aasna serves him the meal and a glass of water.

"Its yummy right? Garima has made it.", says Gaurav.

"That's why it's so good!", says Aarav after relishing a bite of the poha.

"That's how we do it. You must have been missing it there.", says Garima.

"Indeed, I am literally starving there. But yes, Garima aunty, what was the conversation about?", says Aarav.

"Aasna, show him the mail.", says Gaurav.

"Okay Papa.", says Aasna.

Saying this, Aasna opens her interview mail and shows it to Aarav. Aarav reads the whole mail, and feels nothing but mesmerized.

"This is... this is beautiful. Evergreen Heights is from where I did my matriculation. It's the best school in this city. When did you apply?", says Aarav.

"Few weeks back, before Nitya's wedding.", says Aasna.

"You must go for it Aasna. Such a reputed institution, it's great.", says Aarav.

Aasna remained silent. Garima starts speaking.

"She has been trying a lot for an opportunity to show her true potential. Let's hope for the best.", says Garima.

"Aasna, did you try something before this? I mean, this shouldn't be the first time you are working.", asks Aarav.

No one spoke. Aarav couldn't understand the reason behind the silence. Suddenly someone at the door speaks.

"Let's encourage Aasna in her new found aspiration rather than asking about the past.", says Aniket.

"Bhaiya, come... I have served the breakfast for you.", says Garima.

"Hmm... the Indori Poha, never found it in London, all they eat is Garlic Naan and Butter Chicken in the name of Indian Cuisine.", says Aniket.

Aniket washes his hands and sits down beside Aarav.

“Yes, so Aasna, I heard Aarav speak about his school and then Garima broke in to speak about your opportunities. What is it?”, says Aniket.

“Actually Mr. Rana, she has been selected for an interview from my childhood school, and I think it’s wonderful for her.”, says Aarav.

“Yes, but I know how everyone here feels about this. Gaurav sees it differently, Garima has her own notions about it, and you, a teacher yourself, feels great that Aasna is getting an opportunity to share your profession, isn’t it?”, says Aniket.

“Yes sir. I think you are right.”, says Aarav.

“But Aasna, what matters is, what you believe this interview means for you. If you think you can get something better than this, you can skip it.”, says Aniket.

Gaurav seems disturbed by this statement. Garima is lit up by this and speaks.

“Yes Aasna, you must think calmly about this. After all, it’s about your future.”, says Garima.

“I didn’t complete my words Garima. Let me finish.”, says Aniket.

“Oh bhaiya, sorry.”, says Garima.

“But, if you believe this is what you want to do, if you feel this is what you think can give you everything to, if you think this will satisfy you for the rest of your life, and you believe this will help you grow your confidence in whatever you do in life ahead, don’t miss it. Treat this as your last shot at the one thing you want to achieve.”, says Aniket.

“Yes beta, I know it very well, you want to do this. So please don’t miss this opportunity Aasna.”, says Gaurav.

“What do you say Aasna? What do you want to do?”, says Aarav.

Aasna, who heard everyone till now, looking into their eyes, now looks into Aarav’s eyes, and sees a genuine urge in his eyes to hear a “yes” from her to this offer. She doesn’t think much, she makes her decision.

“Alright, I am going for it. I will give my best.”, says Aasna.

Everyone breathes out a relaxing breath. Gaurav is very happy. Garima can’t say anything more here, she is content. Aniket is happy with

Aasna's quick thinking, and Aarav, he is having butterflies in his stomach

by the thought of sharing his profession with the girl he loves.

"Very good beta. I am proud of you no matter what. But wait a second, I have meeting on 13th, Garima will go with Aasna that day?", says Gaurav.

"Oh no, it just struck my mind, there's a 21st day celebration of my niece's baby boy. Woh Bhopal wali cousin meri, uski beti ko beta hua hai. So I have to go with my mother.", says Garima.

Seems like Garima deliberately wants Aasna to avoid this opportunity.

"Oh... Raghuvir Chacha's daughter Aarti right? It's been ages I have met her. Let me accompany you then. I will spend some time with Maasi ji too.", says Aniket.

"Then who is going to go with Aasna?", says Aarav.

"It's okay, I will go by myself.", says Aasna.

"Aarav are you here till then? If you are, why not go with Aasna? You will also visit your old school.", says Gaurav.

"Hmm... that's a good idea.", says Aniket.

"Arey don't bother him, he might have some work.", says Garima

"Actually, I am free and I am here till the end of this month. So I can... do it.", says Aarav.

Aasna looks at him blissfully. She thinks to herself... *"Aarav can really turn the world upside down to spend some time of his life with me."*

"Wonderful! I will attend my meeting, Garima and Aniket will attend the function, and Aasna will go for her interview with Aarav. Let's go with this.", says Gaurav.

Garima smiles, but isn't that amused. She really wanted Aasna to miss this interview.

"Thank you beta. You are so helpful, God bless you.", says Garima.

"It's my duty aunty. We all know each other for so long, it's like my elders in family giving me some task to do. I have to.", says Aarav.

"You are a good boy. I like you.", says Aniket.

“The credit goes to my father. I am everything what he has taught me.”, says Aarav.

Aniket smiles, looks at his sister and brother in law, looks back at Aarav, and nods in acceptance. Garima and Gaurav pause here at the mention of Atul. Suddenly Aarav receives a notification in his phone. It's a message from his friends to reach at a tea stall sharp by 10 am.

“Alright everyone, I have to leave. I loved the breakfast and spending this time with you all.”, says Aarav.

“Sure. Have fun with your buddies. Aasna, please leave him at the door.”, says Gaurav.

Aarav and Aasna walk up to the door.

“Aarav, thank you so much. If you go with me on the interview day, it will really boost my confidence.”, says Aasna.

“All thanks to your dedication. But Aasna, why did you do it so late? You had the qualifications. Were you trying something else?”, says Aarav.

Aasna pauses, and starts thinking about something deeply. Suddenly, a quick flashback occurs in her mind of that night when she went through something hurtful. Garima is involved here. But she gets back to her senses.

“Aasna! Are you okay?”, says Aarav.

“Ah... yes, we will talk about it. You must leave quickly, or else Deepak will eat you alive.”, says Aasna.

“As always, you are eager to get rid of me. Alright, bye.”, says Aarav jokingly.

“No Aarav, haha. Take care, bye.”, says Aasna, as she closes the door after Aarav walks out.

This is good. Aasna is going to do something she has been wanting to do for a long time. Gaurav knows she wants to be a teacher, so he is very happy that finally Aasna is following her dreams. As a mother, Garima has to be happy about her daughter pursuing her dreams. Aniket's encouraging words and Aarav's willingness to help her has helped Aasna finally listen to her heart. Is Aasna ready for her new opportunity to become a teacher, or her troubling past will affect this

chance too? Aasna has also realized that Aarav will forever love her, not matter what are the odds of them being together. Will this affect her relationship with Yash? Speaking of him, how will he react to Aarav helping Aasna getting her new job? We have to watch out for this!

A month ago.... in a rainy night.

A thunderbolt rips through the dark sky, as the rainstorm fell down mercilessly. A dry leaf flew through the winds in a speed faster than sound, and suddenly hits a window, falling down on the ground. Through the window, in the house, Aasna and Garima are seemingly indulged in a heated conversation.

"I am not going to do this anymore Mama... I can't.", says Aasna.

"All these years I waited just to hear these words from you!", says Garima.

"I lost, I failed, how many times will I convince myself to do something I am not capable of?", says Aasna.

"You have to keep trying, you can't lose hope!", says Garima.

"Mama, why can't you accept I am not meant for this?", says Aasna.

"It's because it's not just me or you but everyone wanted to see you achieve the most respectable job possible. What happened to those dreams Aasna? You saw them right? You told me you will give everything for it!", says Garima.

"Yes, I accept I saw those dreams but... but were they mine?", says Aasna.

When Aasna asked this question, Garima just stepped aback in shock.

"Please, Garima... we can talk about this calmly. Aasna, please tell me, you never wanted to be in civil services? Then why did you not tell us!", says Gaurav.

"I was never given a chance to say it. I was always obeying and I felt I could do it, but I just can't.", says Aasna as she sobs.

"It's okay beta... please don't cry.", says Gaurav.

"Aasna... why are you crying? You have already decided that you are not going to try anymore, so you should be happy that you have finally spoken up.", says Garima.

"I am crying, because I feel like... I am letting you both down.", says Aasna.

"You have. Yes, you are letting us down Aasna.", says an angered Garima.

Aasna looks at her in disbelief. Gaurav gets visibly upset.

"Garima! Don't say like that. She tried hard for so many years, be proud about that!", says Gaurav.

"How does failing in life looks like something to be proud of to you? Gaurav, look at her friends, they are well ahead in life, that's where she should have been too.", says Garima.

"Mama stop comparing me with my friends. If I ever become successful it will be for both of you!", says Aasna agitated, still in tears.

"Aasna lower your voice! She is your mother.", says Gaurav.

"That's why kept listening to her all this time Papa! She instilled in my mind to become a woman who shouldn't be depended on anyone. And for that I have to be someone powerful, a role that will give me the driver's seat in my life. That's why first, she told me appear the UPSC, I did. Then I appeared for it once, twice, thrice but four times without any break, I also did that. In the process, I just got lost. I gave so much time and energy of my life to the aims I never aimed for, the dreams I never dreamt of. I completely forgot who I was. Now, when I have finally realized that I am not being myself, I am not getting the support I need.", says Aasna at one breath.

Saying this, she breaks down incessantly.

"So, you are blaming me for your constant failures. Am I the one who has brought you here? Am I the reason behind you '*realizing*' that you are losing yourself to the fate? That's what you want to say Aasna, right?", says Garima, approaching her daughter assertively.

"Mama I didn't mean that.", says Aasna hesitantly.

"Garima please don't make her feel gullible. Please step back and calm down.", insists Gaurav.

"Aasna just say yes.. or.. no.", says Garima.

"Mama please try to understand...", says Aasna.

“YES OR NO! CAN’T YOU HEAR ME!”, Garima screams.

Aasna froze on her ground. Reluctantly, yet conveying the truth, she nods her head up and down. Garima boils up in sheer anger. Gaurav steps aside, and watches the scene horrified. Garima couldn’t hold it anymore, raises her hands and slaps Aasna across her face!

Aasna instantly holds her cheeks and looks at her mother shocked, as if the earth just shattered. Gaurav staggered, collapses, and slams himself on a stool, sits on it devastated.

“Where did I go wrong? Expecting my daughter to stand on her own feet, unlike other parents who think their daughters will find happiness after getting married to a successful man, was believing in my only child my gravest mistake?! As a mother, can I not expect from you to be someone world will look up to and respect you always?! Can I not be proud of you becoming something important for us, because you Aasna... you mean the world to me and your father right here?! I am cruel to care for you... tell me!!!!”, says Garima, and starts crying unremittingly.

Gaurav just closes his eyes in disbelief and couldn’t hold back his tears too. Aasna, slowly removing her palm from her face, mugs up her courage as she starts speaking.

“No, Mama. You were never wrong. You just couldn’t understand me. And it seems, you will never understand me. What could be more worse than this? What more... “, says Aasna.

Aasna leaves the hall sobbing hard. Garima's emotions escalate and she sits down on the sofa, crying yet unable to breathe. Gaurav quickly attends her and gives her a glass of water to drink. Though Gaurav is

helping her, he seems clearly dejected and unhappy with Garima.

“Gaurav, please check on Aasna. I shouldn’t have done that to her.”, says Garima.

“You remember you did this to someone last time, she left this place out of humiliation. But this wasn’t humiliation, this was absolute ignorance. If my Aasna goes through even an inch closer to what Vedika went through, I won’t forgive you. Never... remember that Garima.”, says Gaurav assertively.

He gets up and goes towards Aasna's room. Garima sat there shattered, crying helplessly. She looks outside the window... thunderstorm is raging outside as it rained heavily this dark night. She blames herself for this. Gaurav consoles his daughter in her room. Aasna has never been this sad in her life.

Present day...

"Aasna! We are here. Lets go.", says Aarav.

"Uh.. yes.. sure let's go Aarav.", says Aasna.

Aarav and Aasna have arrived at the school. Aasna kept thinking about that fateful night throughout her bike ride with Aarav, just like the good old days. Both get down of Aarav's iconic bullet as Aasna walks into the gate with aspirations high in her heart, and Aarav walking in with nostalgia in his mind coming back to his school.

"I think that's where we must go. Let's ask the guard.", says Aarav.

"Sure Aarav, I will wait here.", says Aasna.

Aarav goes to ask the whereabouts of Aasna's interview place in the school to the security guard at the gate.

"Will Mama be happy if I work here? It might take some time, but I hope, she will realize how happy I'll be here.", thinks Aasna.

"Aasna we have to walk towards our right, and take the stairs to first floor. This school has changed in so many years. Beautiful days for the young me who came here like a geek, left like a hero.", says Aarav.

"I hope you meet some people you know here. Let's go now.", says Aasna.

"Yep, let's move ahead.", says Aarav.

Both walk up to the stairs as and reach the floor where Aasna will give her interview. Many have come to find a job in this school. Aasna has to wait for her turn as she gives her enrollment number to an office staff sitting in her small cabin and she tells her to wait.

"These corridors, we used to run around here or stand in punishments. It's good to be back here. We will take a stroll through the school after your interview if you don't mind Aasna.", says Aarav.

“Why not! I also want to see the place where I will work.”, says Aasna.

“That’s the spirit! Aasna, I don’t know what exactly you’ve been through all these years, all I know it’s been tough for you. However it must have been, I believe I can say, I understand it. It’s because for all these years, I have been going through tough times too.”, says Aarav.

“I knew it, but still, that’s not a good thing. I hope it didn’t take a toll on you.”, says Aasna.

“Well, it did. Feeling home sick, feeling Papa’s absence in front of my eyes, and miss you. Miss you so much that I would end up breaking down every time. All of this did wrench my heart but also became the reason for my occasional migraines. It’s been rough. I needed to come back and I have felt a lot better.”, says Aarav.

“I am sorry for all of that. Make the best out of this visit. You just might not get another chance.”, says Aasna.

“Don’t be sorry, first. Second, it’s not my last. I will come back. I will come back as many times as possible. If it’s my task out of all of them to make your days better, your life happier, I am going to return hundreds of times. I will. It’s my promise. Aasna, I did say last time that I won’t return, but now I have once, I will again do it. Perhaps I didn’t know how bad it feels to live without loving you. I will return, to love you.”, says Aarav.

Aarav says this passionately, yet in a composed manner. Aasna can feel how determined Aarav is about his love. She looked at him as a dreamy girl would look at her charming prince. As her smile widens, Aasna speaks.

“Will your university not expel you for taking so many leaves? If not, that’s very unprofessional.”, says Aasna humorously.

“Ah... when it comes to love, our principal sir is very unprofessional himself.”, says Aarav as he replies with an apt joke.

“Wonderful. I hope this school is not like that.”, says Aasna.

Both had a good laugh here.

“Ms. Aasna Sharma. Please come to the interview room.”, says the office staff.

“Alright Aasna, stay calm. You have your parents’ blessing, our support and best wishes with you. Don’t be afraid, just speak your heart out.”, says Aarav.

“Thank you Aarav. I’ll see you in awhile.”, says Aasna.

Aasna goes into the room with her files. Aarav awaits outside, all the time praying for the meeting to go smooth and Aasna succeeds in getting her job. Meanwhile, Yash is sitting in his chamber.

“All my hearings done for the day. Let’s call Aasna. I won a good case today, I need to give her the best news first.”, says Yash.

Yash takes out his cell phone. He calls Aasna, the phone is switched off.

“Switched off? Is everything alright? Let me call... yes... Prerna must know what is Aasna doing.”, says Yash.

He calls Prerna now, Prerna picks up real quick.

“Hi Yash! What’s up?”, says Prerna.

“Hello Prerna, how are you doing?”, says Yash.

“Laid down on bed. What are you doing?”, says Prerna.

“Classic Prerna. I am in my chamber. I was looking for Aasna, her number is switched off. Is everything good?”, says Yash.

“Ah it’s all good. Aasna has gone for a job interview. She must be at... what’s that school name? Han... Evergreen Heights International School. Yah, that’s the school.”, says Prerna.

“The interview was today? Aasna was selected and she didn’t tell me? Wow? Why wouldn’t she?”, says Yash.

“Well, I don’t know, but the reason is... ah..”, says Prerna but stumbles.

“What is the reason? Tell me please.”, says Yash casually.

“Don’t panic. She has gone with Aarav for the interview.”, says Prerna.

Yash didn’t speak a word after hearing that. He was playing with his pen, his fingers stopped after hearing the name. But before exploding, he speaks to Prerna.

“Alright Prerna, I will check with Aasna afterwards.”, says Yash.

“Yeah, don’t think otherwise. Both Garima aunty and Gaurav uncle told him to do so. That’s why.”, says Prerna.

“Yes I understand Prerna. Let’s talk afterwards, I have some work.”, says Yash.

“Alright, bye!”, says Prerna.

“Yup, take care.”, says Yash.

Both cut the call. Yash kept his phone assertively on the table. A pale look covered his face, this wasn’t anger, but fear. He kept staring at a certain direction in his chamber and started breathing heavily. Yash then starts looking around, as if he has no clue what to do. He bends down, the panting intensifies. All the blood in his veins flow towards his face, squinting his eyes and pressing his jaw close to his teeth. And like a lion in agony, Yash roars, screams loudly, wakes up, smashes his hands on the table, dropped everything on the table to the floor, got up and kicked his chair away from himself, and holds his head, finally to calm himself down.

“HE DID IT! THAT SICK BASTARD DID IT AGAIN! AAAARGH!!!!”, Yash yells.

As he comes back to his senses, Yash looks up towards the ceiling, combing his hair back by his palm, and starts laughing hysterically. Yash has completely lost it.

That is terrifying. Yash might not have felt like this in a long time. He seemed like he changed in these years, but deep down, he still fears, that he might lose Aasna to fate. And the worse would be to lose her to Aarav, the man he got rid of years ago, who is back now. He knows what Aasna has been through all these years and what all of that led to, that one fateful night which haunts Aasna daily. Even after all that, Aarav had to be the one who motivated Aasna to come back strong from that setback. Maybe that’s the reason behind Yash’s haunting reaction to the fact that Aasna has gone for her job interview with the man he still despises deep in his heart. This is intensifying. We must keep seeing where this leads to!

Aasna comes out of the room. Aarav stood all the time outside the door, fingers crossed. Aasna looks at him, eyes wide open, her inner eyebrows raised, and her lips pressed a bit, as she wanted to say something. Aarav stared at her curiously and breathing a bit heavily, praying in his mind for not hearing the bad news.

“What happened Aasna? Did you make it?”, says Aarav cautiously.

“I gave my best.”, says Aasna.

“And? Just say it!”, says Aarav.

“They seemed unhappy.”, says Aasna.

“Why!?” , asks Aarav.

“With how things went for me till now, I couldn’t make it before.”, says Aasna.

“Oh... so... did they ask for more?”, says Aarav, a bit dejected.

“No... it was more than enough. So much that...”, Aasna stops abruptly.

“So much what!?! Come on Aasna please tell me did they recruit you or not!”, says Aarav eagerly.

“Not in nursery section... but I will be a teacher for elementary grades!”, says Aasna.

She reveals the great news in all excitement! Aarav jumped in joy cheering loud, but then corrects his composure. Aasna is crying a bit happily. Aarav wanted to embrace her, but he controls his emotions, and just grabbed her closed fists with both of his palms, and bend down to bring the hands to his forehead.

“This is amazing. Congratulations Aasna, I am so proud of you!”, says Aarav.

“I can’t believe it. Thank you so much Aarav.”, says Aasna.

“Why did you create so much suspense? I was so scared! Don’t do that again Aasna!”, says Aarav. “I am sorry. But I still can’t believe it. I am

employed. I am going to do what I forever wanted to. I can't thank you enough Aarav.", says Aasna.

"It's not just me, it's you, your parents, your uncle, everyone who wished well for you! We all are glad.", says Aarav.

"Ab ek mahine mein pehli salary ki party, aana zarur Aarav.", says Aasna cherishingly.

"Me? How will I be there?", asks Aarav.

"Why? Where will you be?", says Aasna perplexed.

She is so happy that she has forgotten the fact that Aarav is going to leave soon.

Aarav: Aur kuch dinon mein main chala jaaunga, do hafte baad mujhe apne lectures resume karne padenge.

Aasna was left staggered, as she didn't expect Aarav to leave, almost never.

"Will you really go back... so soon?", asks Aasna humbly

Aarav turns around to his lady love, smiles at her wittily, and replies to her sombre question.

"You thought I would stay here forever... did you?", says Aarav.

"No I thought, your presence in such an occasion, would have felt great. Not just for me but everyone.", says Aasna.

"Either I stay here or not, you will celebrate the day.", says Aarav.

"Wow, you will really leave us all. Good for you.", says Aasna.

"Aasna, I get it. But cheer up! Do something cool with your first earning.", says Aarav.

"What did you do with your first salary?", says Aasna.

"Honestly, I wanted to gift Papa a watch. But he warned me to not spend my first few incomes on expensive stuff. So I used it to throw a small party for some little kids in a nearby slum. Some delicacies and toys, they were really happy.", says Aarav.

"That's beautiful! You are so thoughtful, I will do the same.", says Aasna.

“Even if you don’t do it, Krishna Ji will bless you. After all, you are his best creation.”, says Aarav, a bit humorously but he meant it.

“Oh come on now Aarav. Let’s go and visit “our” school.”, says Aasna.

“Sure thing, our school. Let’s see. My classes used to be on the other side of the school.”, says Aarav.

Both Aarav and Aasna take a walk through the school campus, seeing through the scenery and the new infrastructure of the school. Aarav meets up some people he knows well, it was a humble reunion for him. He introduced them with their new employee, who will join them in the new session. Aasna's beautiful presence mesmerized the elderly staff of the school, as if their own daughter has arrived. They met the principal of the school, who turned out be the niece of the former principal of the school, the one during Aarav's tenure as a student here. Radhika Mohanan, the principal of Evergreen Heights International School, welcomed her new employee Aasna. Later, as Aarav and Aasna left, they had a brief conversation.

“They all remember you so well Aarav, just like you do. That must have made you feel special.”, says Aasna.

“I can’t explain you Aasna how good I am feeling today. It’s been in a long time I have felt so welcomed. On top of it, your success gives me immense happiness. It’s truly a great day for me.”, says Aarav.

“I am glad that you are feeling happy. It’s miraculous that moments ago you explained me how sad you were for last eight years and in just eight minutes or something you’ve become the most happiest soul ever.”, says Aasna.

“Every moment with you feels like years of happiness I had lost once, now no more. It’s that simple Aasna, it’s not magic. It’s love.”, says Aarav.

Aasna stops walking after hearing that. The smile on her face this time was a mix of blush and pettiness. She knows Aarav loves her and her presence with him, but she can’t give it back to him to its full potential. Aasna accepts it harshly. Deep down, she wants to give all the love of the world to Aarav. But she remembers what Aarav told her years ago in that trip. But she knows, this is not the Aarav of eight

years back, he is here to win her, not only her heart. She turns around and speaks.

“Aarav, some things must remain a magic. Only then we won’t knot our emotions into it. Our bond, this friendship is an absolute miracle, and I just love it this way.”, says Aasna.

“Love is a miracle in itself Aasna.”, says Aarav.

“I believe love is a reality. It’s a responsibility.”, says Aasna.

“Love is the only miracle, that’s real. And that’s why, it’s the most beautiful emotion in the universe.”, says Aarav, holding Aasna’s arms affectionately.

This is the most romantic he has ever been. Those words just instilled a sense of passion in their hearts for each other. Aasna blushed, but couldn’t get her eyes off Aarav.

“How do you do it Aarav? You know well that you are never going to live your dream, still you love me so selflessly. What have I even done for you? I didn’t even ask you about your well being for last eight years? Didn’t that feel harsh? Tell me Aarav?” , says an ever curious Aasna.

Aarav stepped back, and turns towards Aasna, looks into her eyes and speaks.

“Aasna, do you know—after our grandparents’ generation, the parents who came next, like our own, started raising their children to stand on their own feet. Their main aim was to make sure their kids wouldn’t need anyone when they grew up—that they’d become “lone wolves” ready to face anything in life. My father is no different; he raised me the same way. That’s why, as a child, I used to think I never needed anyone... and marriage? I never even considered it. That’s how I used to think—until I found you. You have no idea, Aasna, how lucky I feel that because of you, I could dare to dream of things like marriage, a home, children... all those love-filled dreams. For the first time, I saw a future with someone—and that someone was you. So what if the sorrow of being away from you stays with me? If tomorrow you live out my dreams with Yash, even then, I’ll find a lifetime’s worth of happiness in that. Aasna, in this life—or any other—I could never thank you enough. That’s why... I don’t feel bad at all.” , says Aarav.

Aasna tilts her head away, and tears start flowing out of the silent anguish in her heart, cursing herself for not being able to love Aarav back. Aarav closed his eyes, and almost cried, a bit proudly, for finally making Aasna realize his feelings completely. Aasna walks close to Aarav, and with all the emotions oozing out of her sentiment, makes a wish to Aarav.

“In this life, I will do just one thing... I will pray... that in the next life... may Krishna Ji make me yours. Because if I don't live this love, then what will be the meaning of my life?”, says Aasna.

Aarav was blissed after hearing that. It's crystal clear now, Aasna is no longer immune to Aarav's love. She can't escape it. She desperately wants to love him back, but is ready to wait for one more life, just like Aarav is. This is true love, a love which won't be replicated again. To make the moment even more eventful, a little drizzle of rain started pouring on their faces and the very world they are present in right now.

“Uh... well, this rainy season is so unpredictable.”, says Aarav.

“Yes, I have to go give the great news to my parents first. Let's go home now.”, says Aasna.

“Yup (sits on bike and starts it), take your seat Aasna.”, says Aarav.

“Sure.”, says Aasna.

She sits in the normal position behind Aarav this time, she came sitting sideways on the bullet to school.

Both start their ride back to home. The beautiful roads of their city is beautified by the little droplets of rain, the chiming sounds of it dropping on earth can be heard well. It's 3 in the noon, and most of the vehicles are resting in home or parked in parking lots of offices. Only school and college buses, some auto-rickshaws and taxis are moving on roads. Aarav and Aasna ride through the pleasant crowd willfully towards Aasna's home.

Aarav is focused on driving his bullet carefully, Aasna is staring at Aarav's chiseled face, the handsome face she missed looking at for years. The eyes she missed seeing into, which loves her more than anything in this world, is beaming happily. She couldn't realize it eight years ago, but now she has, so she is going to be everything what Aarav dreams her to be. In short, she doesn't accept it, but Aasna finally... loves Aarav.

They reach their destination. Aasna runs into her home. Gaurav, Garima and Aniket stand up in unison, as they waited for her eagerly. Aasna teared up happily and nods her head in approval, silently confirming them the wonderful news. Gaurav walks towards her daughter, Aasna walks towards her father and both embrace each other delightedly! Gaurav kisses Aasna on her forehead, and blesses her adoringly. Garima, who couldn't look at her daughter's eyes, had to show her happiness, with some guilt, after Aasna hugged her from behind. Garima cries incessantly and turns around to hug her tightly. She asks for apology as she sobs in her daughter's shoulder for her past mistake, and Aasna apologizes Garima right away. The mother and the daughter have a soulful moment. Garima did make sweets and makes Aasna eat one piece, as this was a merry occasion for them as a family. Aasna now is received by her uncle Aniket who hugged her, holds his niece's face affectionately and congratulates her. Aasna thanked him graciously. Aarav kept watching the cheerful scene leaning at the door, hands folded and a smile garnished on his face, and when Gaurav notices him, he calls him in and hugs him too. Garima feeds a piece of her sweet to Aarav too, and he takes it happily.

"Thank you so much Aarav. You have did something none of us could.", says Gaurav.

"I just assisted her to the school today. That's not possible. I will never be able to replicate what you all have done for Aasna.", says Aarav.

"No beta. You're the first to realize what Aasna wanted to do in her life. Sounds so wrong we couldn't, right? That's unacceptable, but it's true.", says Gaurav.

"It's alright uncle. Now Aasna is where she wants to be. Lets be happy about it.", says Aarav.

"He is right Gaurav. Past is a place of reference, not a place of residence. Let it go. Look at the bright future of your daughter and be happy.", says Aniket.

While saying this, Aniket inadvertently pointed at Aarav. Gaurav and Aarav thought the same thing, and Aarav felt very awkward. Gaurav

fumbles and asked Aniket why is he pointing towards Aarav. Aniket realized how they misunderstood him, but as the witty man he is, he raises his hands and eyebrows, gesturing that who knows, it might be true. Gaurav nods in amusement. Aarav chuckles, shyly.

“Elementary grade, that’s amazing. I trust you, you will make us proud. I really do Aasna.”, says Garima.

“Yes Mama, I will. I am sorry for all those years of failure. Now you will never see me losing faith in me.”, says Aasna.

“Fine, no more *rona dhona*. Let’s be happy and celebrate today. We will order our dinner from a very good restaurant. Hey, Aarav beta, will you join in?”, asks Garima.

“Ah sorry aunty. I have cooked the dinner for me and Papa already.”, says Aarav.

“Aarav, you cook too? I never knew that.”, says Aasna.

“Eight years living all by my own, do you think I will always have that uninspiring mess food?”, says Aarav.

Everyone has a good laugh.

“Good, *aapatti mein sampatti dhund liya aapne mahashay*.”, says Aniket.

“Haha... that was a good one bhaiya.”, says Gaurav.

“He is known for talking in quotations. He will have even more in his pockets Aarav, do not worry.”, says Garima.

“That’s great. Well, I will take my leave. I have to take Papa for marketing in the evening.”, says Aarav.

“Yes, you would be very tired. Go and take some rest beta.”, says Gaurav.

“Thanks again Aarav. We owe you this one.”, says Garima.

“Bye Aarav, thank you for this day.”, says Aasna.

“Hmm... your most welcome Sharma family!”, exclaims Aarav humorously.

“Haha...and Aarav please convey something to your father on behalf of me.”, says Aniket.

“Sure uncle, what is it?”, says Aarav.

“Tell him, I have apologized him, and if possible, ask him to apologize me too.”, says Aniket.

Garima looks at her brother concerned. Gaurav is staggered. Aasna is confused a bit.

“Apologize? I am sorry, but what happened between Papa and you Mr. Rana?”, says Aarav.

“Has he not told you about us?”, says Aniket.

“Ah.. I forgot him to ask how you both met. Is it serious?”, says Aarav.

“No, it’s okay. Just let him know. It’s something from our past. But as I said, we must not live with it.”, says Aniket.

“Alright Mr. Rana. Whatever it is, I am really sorry for it.”, says Aarav.

“No Aarav, please don’t be sorry. It was just a bad occurrence. It’s nobody’s fault. Forget about it.”, says Gaurav.

“I asked him to forgive me, but he didn’t.”, says Garima softly and a bit sadly.

“Who Mama? Who didn’t forgive you?”, says Aasna.

“No one, Aasna we will talk about this later on. Today, it’s about you. Only you.”, says Gaurav, trying to change the mood.

“Yes that’s right. Alright Aarav, let’s meet you again.”, says Aniket.

“Okay... bye everyone!” , says Aarav.

“Bye Aarav, take care.”, says Aasna.

Gaurav and Garima wave at him. Aarav leaves the Sharma residence with a little curiousness of what transpired between Aniket and Atul, but he had no mood to stress about it. It was a happy day for him. He feels, not only Aasna is content, but just maybe, he won her over heart today. As he rides back to his home on his bullet, he keeps thinking about that surreal moment. Aarav is on seventh heaven. Will he be, as long as Yash is there? Speaking of Yash, he just left Aarav's house, leaving Atul in despair.

“Aarav, where are you my son? Come back quick, please.”, says Atul as he is in despair, seated on a chair.

Few moments later...

Aarav returns to his home after a long day. He always has the keys of the main door, so that he doesn't make Atul struggle to come and open the door for him.

"Welcome back Aarav. So, how did it the interview go?", says Atul.

"Papa, I can't be anymore happier than this. Aasna has done it! She is going to teach students of elementary level! This is beautiful.", says Aarav.

"That's great. I must call and congratulate her. Such a huge thing for her. She must be proud.", says Atul, a bit gravely.

"What happened Papa? Why don't you look pleased with the news? You were too anticipated when I left home.", says Aarav.

"I was, and I am still very happy after hearing that Aasna is finally getting to do what she wants. But I already know it beta.", says Atul.

"Already? Who told you? Aasna was with me all this time. Did Gaurav uncle call you when I was returning home?", says Aarav.

"No Aarav. Yash was here.", says Atul.

"Yash? Did he tell you? How did he know?", says Aarav.

"Prerna did. Didn't you tell her about the job interview that day? Yes, she let Yash know.", says Atul.

"Oh... but Papa... what's with that dejected look? Did... did Yash say something?", says Aarav.

Aarav's demeanour changes after the question.

"Hmm (exhales). Aasna should have told Yash about you escorting her to school for the interview.", says Atul.

"That's strange that he didn't know, but that shouldn't affect you.", says Aarav.

"He was here, and he was very unhappy about it.", says Atul.

"Unhappy... Did he say anything? What did he say? Tell me Papa!", says Aarav concerned, as he comes closer to his father.

"Sit down, let me tell you everything.", says Atul.

Both father and son sit down on the sofa. Atul takes his time, and starts narrating his interaction with Yash moments ago.

This is something we were not expecting. A day which went so well, seems to have hit a new twist. It was quite evident after Yash's reaction that something big is going to take place. Has the inevitable finally happened?

What a pleasant surprise! Come in Yash.”, says Atul.

“How are you doing Atul sir?”, asks Yash.

“Good. How was your day at the court today?”, says Atul.

“I was going to talk about it. You see sir, I got some good news for you, not one but two.”, says Yash.

“Wow, let’s go. Let’s hear the first one.”, says Atul ecstatically.

“So today, I had a remarkable win in a case. A huge real estate fraud I was fighting against for few months now, the culprits finally are behind the bars.”, says Yash.

“That’s going to make a great name for you! That was one of the biggest property scandals in this state’s history. Congratulations Yash!”, says Atul.

“Thank you sir. And now the second amazing news is... Aasna has secured a job at Evergreen Heights International School. Yes, your favourite girl in the friend circle has done it.”, says Yash

Atul had his eyes wide open which started tearing up. He smiled gladly and joined his hands praying his almighty one.

“*Har Har Mahadev!*... This is unbelievable. I was praying Shiv ji for so long to see this day. Why didn’t... why didn’t Aarav inform me yet? He has gone to-.”, says Atul, but gets interrupted by Yash.

“- to the school with Aasna. I know he has taken her for the interview.”, says Yash.

“Did he tell you about this Yash?”, says Atul.

“No sir, Aasna called me few minutes ago and gave me the big news. But I didn’t tell her that I knew she has gone with Aarav. I congratulated her, but nothing more than that, because it doesn’t matter.”, says Yash.

“It does matter Yash. Aasna didn’t tell you about being selected for the interview, then who did?”, says Atul.

“Prerna did. Your niece is too nice to let me know about such a surprise that Aasna kept from me.”, says Yash.

“She has never learned to keep secrets. Silly girl.”, says Atul humorously.

“At least she isn’t keeping things hidden from me.”, says Yash.

“Why do you sound gutted Yash? If someone keeps such a surprise for me, I would be so glad.”, says Atul.

“It’s not about the job interview. It’s about... (looks up into Atul’s eyes agitated) who accompanied her to the school for interview. Aarav, he knew about this before me. He was advised by her parents to escort her to the school. The question isn’t why him... it’s about how it can be him who has to do it sir!”, says Yash angrily.

Atul is devastated after realizing Yash's animosity with Aarav.

“After all these years of my son staying away from us, I thought you will finally find some faith in him. I wished to look up to both of you as my sons. But seems, you will never trust him.”, says Atul.

“I would be glad to trust Aarav, but the truth is, I will be the last soul in this world to trust him Mr. Verma. I have accompanied Aasna to those entrance exams for which she worked hard for! I was with her in those interviews in which she failed! I was the one who gave her the shoulder to cry on! I was with Aasna at her worst! But at her happiness, someone just barges into my place like it was never mine.”, says Yash.

Yash’s tone changed, he sounded as if he was grunting.

“Aarav is not just some stranger to Aasna, he is a friend to her and to Aarav, she is a responsibility.”, says Atul.

“If he believes Aasna is his responsibility, where was he for the last eight years, those years which were the saddest years of her life. Where was your son when Aasna was crying in front of Garima aunty for not living up to her expectations? Who heard that sobbing call of hers where she needed that emotional support? It was me! And yet who shares her happiness... Aarav.”, says Yash.

Atul nods helplessly, eyes squinted with disbelief, and speaks back like a dejected man.

"It's not who is a part of her happiness or who is at Aasna's absolute worst. It's about Aasna herself. We all were there with her. Unlike Aarav, who was dealing with his heartbreak, his grief, his sufferings, all by his own. All these years, he cried his tears nonstop like a relentless rain with a heart raging like a violent thunderstorm. After years can't he make himself feel blissed by doing something for someone he admires to death?", says Atul.

"Admires her to death... Why doesn't he let his love die? And he is himself responsible for his tale of woe. We have sacrificed our dreams to be what our parents want from us. That's what we are taught since childhood, to live up to our parent's expectations, that's our sole responsibility. Aarav could have stayed with you and accomplish his dreams, he subjected himself to his ambitions and lost the bonds of everyone around him.", says Yash.

"Did you see how everyone welcomed my son at Nitya's wedding? The amount of love he received that day, he was yearning for it. He doesn't pursue his true dreams too Yash. Aarav never wanted to be a teacher like me or Aasna, yet he does it not because I want him to do it, but because he believes that this is where he belongs.", says Atul.

"So why doesn't he go back? Isn't his university being strict for taking such a long leave? He didn't had the guts to be when you, Aasna and everyone needed him, but he has the audacity to return and snatch something that solely belongs to me. Really? This is what his love means? I would never love Aasna like this.", says Yash.

"Yash! Mind your words. The love he has in his heart is his own, but the way he loves, is inherited from me. He came back when Aasna needed him the most, and did something she could never do it on her own. But did he do much? It happened eventually. And how did he come back, because he was invited to Nitya's wedding. It's written in the stars Yash. Aasna was at her happiest eight years back, when my son was with her. She has now accomplished her aims, in his presence. Aarav is meant to be her lucky charm. Just accept it.", says Atul.

"A lucky charm that is trying to ruin my life! He loves Aasna sir, and because this "way of love" is inherited from you, I know why he is still here. He doesn't want to live all alone with his one sided feelings, like

you are living, with a heart deliberately broken, by seeking your demised wife all the time.”, says Yash unhesitatingly.

Atul was angered by the last sentence, his soul is tearing apart after hearing it from someone he thought is just like his own son.

“That’s what you think about his love? You are so wrong. You will never understand it. Because your love is solely depended on protecting it in case you lose it. Ironically, you are more accomplished than the other two in the conversation here. Yes, if thought long term, once you become a big name in the field, you will keep Aasna very happy. But love is not defined by the materialistic needs of relationship nor the overconfidence of having this relation, but by what you sacrifice for the love, not what you sacrifice in love.”, says Atul.

“What did your son sacrifice for his love?”, says Yash.

“He sacrificed his love itself, to the higher power. He left it on them to take care of his beloved Aasna. He prayed every single day for her well being. But seems like, someone other than the Almighty, has not been able to fulfill his responsibility. That’s why Aarav has come back, to finish this misery of Aasna.”, says Atul confidently.

Yash bit his lips, agitated by that statement.

“If I hadn’t done my responsibilities well, she would have left me long ago. But Aasna believes in me. How will you and your son are going to change that sir?”, says Yash.

“That’s her goodwill Yash. You must feel lucky to have her in your life. But Aasna is also a part of Aarav's life. It’s such that even her life is incomplete without him.”, says Atul.

“Aarav is lucky that Aasna is his friend, because the reality is, she won’t leave me. She neither left me eight years ago, nor she will leave me now.”, says Yash.

“Good that you didn’t say she won’t do what’s right for her in the future.”, says Atul.

Yash stared into his professor's eyes intensely. Biting his teeth aggressively, he speaks one last sentence to Atul before leaving.

“This blind faith in your son’s failed love is going to affect your well being sir, just like it has done with his. Don’t hurt yourself, tell Aarav to look over you. (Pointing his chest) Aasna is my responsibility. Even if I have made mistakes, I have the time to correct them all. I am not going anywhere. But your son will leave soon, he will face the same fate that he faced eight years ago.”, says Yash.

Atul realizes the truth of that statement, and sat on the sofa slowly, but catastrophically. Yash leaves the house uncluttered by his words which has disheartened this old father.

Aarav is shocked to death after hearing his father for the last few minutes. He looks around as if the world turned upside down. But now realizing gravity of the concern in Atul’s head, Aarav fumes up and speaks up.

“He disrespected you at your face Papa. I don’t want to live all alone with my love, like you... that’s what he said? Seriously! And why didn’t you defend yourself Papa. Tell me why!”, says Aarav.

“He is like my son Aarav. I can’t speak at an high voice to him.”, says Atul.

“Your son, Atul Verma’s son can never be like that! How dare he do it.”, says Aarav.

“Calm down Aarav. It’s not good for your brain.”, says Atul.

“Papa... I have to make Yash understand something very necessary. I have been holding back for years, not anymore.”, say Aarav.

“No Aarav. It’s of no use.”, says Atul.

“No. Yash has crossed his line. I won’t stand him and his never ending ego anymore. Since the day he has met me, in this very house, he has looked down upon me. I allowed him to humiliate me, but now no more.”, says Aarav.

“Aarav, what are you going to tell him?”, says Atul.

“What he needs to hear. I will go right now.”, says Aarav.

Aarav paces back towards the door, but holds his hands desperately.

“Please don’t go Aarav, please beta. Don’t escalate the matter.”, says Atul.

“I will stand his disregard to my feelings, but not your disrespect. Let me go Papa.”, says Aarav.

Aarav releases Atul's tight hold on his hands and leaves the house. Atul paces back and forth, rubbing his head, and takes out his phone hastily.

Ayush, Nitya, Deepak and Sarika are on the lit sunset point of the city. The married and the ‘rumoured’ couple are having a stroll on the edge of the point.

“Nitya, I have a weird feeling, something magical is going to happen.”, says Ayush.

“What magic? You proposing me again?”, says Nitya.

“Nope, well I would love to. But right now, look ahead.”, says Ayush.

Ayush and Nitya look towards Deepak and Sarika, who are standing on the barrier looking the river and gossiping.

“This is my favourite place Deepak, you know. I wish I had a reason to visit this place more.”, says Sarika.

Without Sarika's knowledge, Deepak stepped back and takes out a ring from his pocket.

“Oh my god Ayush! No way Deepak is proposing her!”, says Nitya excitedly.

“Shhh... let him focus!”, says Ayush.

Deepak is smiling and praying for this to go well. The moment he opens his mouth to call Sarika to turn around, his phone rings. The iconic meme song “*Moye Moye*” echoes the whole area. Deepak almost broke down in tears, but the moment Sarika turned around, he hastily put the ring in his mouth! Nitya and Ayush laughed off regretfully at a distance.

“Wow! What a ringtone! Now pick the call Deepak!”, says Sarika.

Deepak takes his phone out, it’s Atul. He turns around, takes the ring out of his mouth and speaks into the phone.

“Hello uncle... Deepak here.”, says Deepak.

“Han Deepak, are you busy?”, says Atul.

“No not at all uncle, hehe! Why would I be busy. I am always free!”, says Deepak humorously.

“Deepak please do me a favour. It’s very important.”, says Atul.

“Uncle is everything okay... what happened?”, says Deepak a bit seriously. He realizes Atul is too much worried.

After hearing everything from Atul, Deepak keeps his phone back and looks at Sarika, and then Nitya and Ayush concerned. Seeing him concerned, Sarika and the husband & wife walked towards him. This is absolutely concerning. Yash has finally made his fear evident. Losing Aasna is his worst nightmare, and he resorted to the most irrelevant way to handle his issue, ridiculing and disrespecting an old Atul, his own Guru. Aarav, on the other hand, has no peace it seems like. He was extremely happy the whole day, but in just a matter of minutes, this has turned into a worrisome situation. But this has made him determined in something he wants to say to Yash, not just today but from a long time. What is it going to be?

“I made a huge mistake, I need to go.”, says Perna, as she heads out for Aasna's place.

“What good will happen if you go there? Aasna won't be able to stop what's going to happen.”, says Varun.

“Papa, me, Deepak and Sarika will convince her to do something. She is the only person who can humble both the guys. Nitya and Ayush will try their best to handle the situation between Aarav and Yash directly.”, says Perna.

“You know why Aarav didn't want to return? For this day, he knew his presence will shatter the mental peace of Yash and he will go berserk.”, says Varun.

“When did that brat ever change? Yash was always this egocentric man, you Varun and Perna, you both thought he changed after becoming employed? You thought the new responsibilities upon him will change his manipulative mind? I knew he will never learn the difference between love and obsession!”, rants Tanuja.

“He never made it seem like that, I really thought he is trying to understand Aasna and when he realizes what she really wants in life, I thought Yash will eventually realize that he isn't capable to do that. I always knew he understood his priorities.”, says Perna.

“Still then he kept holding on to Aasna, expecting her to accept things the way they are. Sickening. How could he be so selfish? He changed his life for what he believed he should do for his mother, why can't Aasna expect the same change in her life?”, says Tanuja.

“You must go and stop Aarav. He is usually quiet, but I know he is like his father, he won't stand any sort of impertinence, especially towards Atul.”, says Varun.

“Why should he be stopped? He has the right to speak for his father!”, says Tanuja.

“Tanu the matter is, he is not going to speak for Atul, but for his love, his feelings which has forever been ridiculed and disrespected by Yash!

If he speaks for that, things are going to escalate and may... may lead to drastic turn of events nobody can escape!", says Varun, tensed.

"Varun, how long will he live hiding his feelings for Aasna? Has he no right to fight for his love? Atul did it for Vedika, and you know how hard he fought for it. Atul did it in a losing effort, he lost to his treacherous fate... do you want the same for our Aarav!", says Tanuja.

Tanuja said it with all her heart. Her voice echoed through the house, it was so loud. Varun is left speechless. Prerna is shaken numb hearing this clarion from her mother's mouth.

"Prerna, go and tell Aasna, to do what is right. Enough of showing Yash that she understands his excuses filled with guilt and regret. Aasna has to choose Aarav, or else... or else her life will be ruined!", says Tanuja.

"Alright, I won't mess it up this time. I will try my best.", says Prerna. Saying this, Prerna quickly leaves riding on her scooter.

"Changing Aasna's mind is difficult Tanu. She realized her true aim in life after years of not knowing it. And it has happened just now, she needs some time to settle down.", says Varun.

"Changing Aasna's mind might be difficult, but not her heart. And only one man has ever done it, is Aarav. Before becoming friends with Aarav, she used to be so acquainted with her own self. But after meeting Aarav, and after Aarav left for his higher studies, only one question that ever came on her lips were – *How is Aarav? How is he doing? Did he talk to us?* – Isn't that enough to tell you what her heart wants?", says Tanuja.

"That's true. She can't live with a lie, that is acknowledging her relationship with Yash. She loves Aarav for sure. And it's because she has accepted the fact, that Aarav will never love anyone else. It would be

right if they finally realize their bond. Aarav has done it, but Aasna has to do it now.", says Varun.

Varun and Tanuja stand at the verandah of their house, hoping for the best.

"Aasna, look at me. It's just you who can stop them. Please do it.", says Sarika.

Sarika and Deepak are in Aasna's house.

"For years, I have spent my days and nights crying in this room. At my worst days, I cried. But the day I thought would be the best one in my life, gets turned into an absolute nightmare.", says Aasna, as she weeps, completely disheartened.

"It's not that big Aasna. But if you don't act, it might get worse. Just call either if the two men and stop them.", says Sarika concerned.

"How don't you get it Sarika? This is not a mere misunderstanding, but something these two men, Aarav and Yash wanted for years. One wants to humiliate the other's feelings, the other wants to fight for his faith in his love. And this is exactly something I tried to avoid for so many years. But this had to happen, and it is happening finally. How should I stop it Sarika... how?", says Aasna.

Deepak, who stood at the window, reading a diary, heard the best friends quietly, but attentively, speaks up.

"I am sorry for reading this without your knowledge and permission, but Aasna, why is it that, since last eight to nine years, in every single page, no one's name is mentioned as much as this one person. I can just see; it's been referred to more than anyone. And the name is.... Aarav.", says Deepak.

Like always, Sarika thought Deepak isn't serious, and gave a stare of agitation to him.

"Don't look at me like that Sarika, I am dead serious. This might sound like an enquiry, but Aasna, why is it that Aarav, someone who wasn't even living with all of us for years, has his name written in every page

of your diary?", asks Deepak.

"Deepak, that doesn't mean I don't love Yash. For every little thing he has done for me, I couldn't ask for more.", says Aasna.

"Did I say you love Aarav? I just asked why his name written in your diary so many times.", says Deepak.

"Deepak, is it a time to play mind games with her? Can you be serious for a minute!", says Sarika.

“Sarika, please try to understand, we write what our heart speaks in our diary, and if your heart is calling someone’s name so many times, it means that person, resides in your heart all the time.”, says Deepak.

“It’s because, I missed my best friend. He was away from us. He was away from me for years. How could I not have him in my thoughts and my diary?”, says Aasna.

“Aasna you were just a message away to know that he was in dire pain. The pain in his heart, that grew every day he lived there, just because he couldn’t see you. His heart clamored to know whether you were happy or not. If you weren’t, he was ready to come back at one beck and call from you.”, says Deepak.

“Just for me he can’t leave his good life. Aarav must realize that...” says Aasna but Deepak interrupts.

“Realize what? Aasna... nobody could have convinced him to come back, because he was too afraid to see this day, when he would’ve to fight for his love, for you. But a hope, a hope that there is not just a chance, but his right to win you from a fate that has bound him with darkness for years, made him come out see your light.”, says Deepak.

“Aasna, you are his light, but he made your day bright and gay as sunshine. That’s Aarav for you, someone no one could be. Think about it.”, says Sarika.

Aasna, who was surely amused by what Deepak and Sarika are trying to convince her, nods her head helplessly and speaks.

“Aarav has done wonders for me, whether it be the day we crossed the river to dance in the tune of Lord Krishna in Satpura, or it be today, when he was present during the biggest success in my life, these two events are the best moments of my existence. In these eight years, may be this hope would have kept him going. But this hope doesn’t cross paths with reality, which is my commitment to Yash, because we love each other. Will anyone understand that?”, says Aasna.

Aasna pleads looking up to both her friends, and then closing her swollen eyes, asking every power in this world to leave her on this fate which she chose for her in love.

“Fine Aasna, choose whoever you feel is the right man for you. But when you choose, remember the days Yash couldn’t understand the

reason behind your pain and made you believe that by time your hardships will fade away, and remember those nights, when Aarav went to the same Krishna, prayed to him, begged him and even cried in front of him to take away all your sorrows.”, says Deepak.

Aasna looked down, convinced that no one is going to understand her dilemma. Suddenly, someone opens the door in Aasna's room, producing a loud thud. Prerna barges in, panting heavily. A face struck with worry, walks slowly towards Aasna. Aasna gazes at her, clueless of how to feel. She was the one with whom Aasna shared the most about this conflict in her heart, and Prerna knows she is the reason behind this mishap that has occurred right now. Prerna can't process how to apologize Aasna for this grave mistake, but as she sits beside her on the edge of the bed, Aasna hugs her best friend, who is the sister of her lover Aarav, and as she sobbed, Aasna asks her softly.

“Did he come back for me? Tell me the truth Prerna.”, says Aasna.

Prerna, perturbed, answers in a low tone.

“Yes, He can't live without you anymore. Aarav will breathe the rest of his life for you... or else he will... he will di...”, Prerna stutters.

Aasna hugs her even tighter and stops her from speaking something that devastating. Prerna couldn't hold it any longer, cries incessantly on Aasna's shoulder. Deepak rubs his head in sigh, while Sarika is worried about this situation. The clash seems inevitable now.

Jaya is seen cutting some fruits on the dining table in the drawing room of her house. Suddenly, the lights go off, indicating a power outage. It's because of an alarming thunderstorm that has started outside her house. She lights up a lamp run by battery that illuminated the room enough to see through the darkness. As she lights it up, she sees a tall figure standing at the hall to the main door, scaring her initially, but upon realizing the person who is in her house without notice, she calms down. It's Aarav.

“Aarav beta, what a surprise! You didn't inform about visiting us.”, says Jaya.

“Sorry Jaya aunty. How are you doing?”, says Aarav.

Even though he is furious, he gently asks Jaya about her well being. Aarav is truly a real man.

“I am fine Aarav. Are you looking for Yash?”, asks Jaya.

“Yes aunty. Some things are so important that you just have to address it. Where is Yash?”, says Aarav.

“Yash is in his room, anything you want from him?”, says Jaya.

“I need to talk to him, please tell him to come and have a conversation right here.”, says Aarav.

“Uhm... okay Aarav. Please take a seat. I am going to call him in ju..”, says Jaya, but gets interrupted.

“It’s okay Maa, I am here.”, says Yash. Yash walked out from his room, walked cautiously as he came into the drawing room. Aarav looks into Yash’s eyes assertively.

“Calm down Aarav, please take the seat. Let’s talk about it as relaxed as possible.”, says Yash.

Jaya felt anxious seeing Aarav’s agitated glare and Yash’s ignorance. She has no idea about the animosity brewing.

“Who told you to visit my home in my absence, and ridicule my father like that? Just because he is your ex-professor, and he admires you like his own son, does not mean you can speak to him like that!”, says Aarav.

“Of course, I don’t have any right to speak to him like that, just like you didn’t have the right to even think about having my space in Aasna’s life.”, says Yash.

“I have never superseded anyone’s position in other people’s life. People have accepted me for who I am, unlike you, who has tried to find his place around the people I have grown up with for last eight years.”, says Aarav.

“So, is that a crime? Someone had to be there when you were away, you never had the time to even ask your closed ones if they were doing well or not. It was me who was a part of their happiness. How do you expect them to be there at your worst?”, says Yash.

“Yash, what makes you talk to him like this!?” , says Jaya.

“Let him Jaya aunty, and what he is saying is right. Yash, I appreciate your efforts of strengthening the bonds with my family and friends, which brings us even closer. Deepak, who hated you during our college days, found a friend in you. Varun Chacha and Prerna were convinced you have changed, you have become humble. But you flushed all those efforts down in vain, by disrespecting a man, who is the sole reason behind who you are today, in profession.”, says Aarav.

“Did you disrespect Prof. Atul? Is this true? Why Yash? What could have gone wrong between you and Aarav?”, says Jaya.

“Maa, I am in a relationship with Aasna for eleven years now. Since twelfth class, we have been in this beautiful bond of love and affection. But Aarav, he is trying break this bond, justifying his forced feelings for her. How do you expect me to react Maa? Tell me.”, says Yash.

“There’s more to it. When I fell in love with Aasna, someone I know since childhood, I never knew you were with her. When I came to know about it, I kept the distance you expected from me, but her pure heart gave me a chance to confess my feelings to her, and since then, she has trusted me as her friend, a friend who will never leave her back. The bond we share is of true friendship, because of you, my feelings have been concealed in this broken heart of mine. If she has given me the right to let this friendship blossom through my love, who are you to stop me?”, Aarav makes his point.

“Where was this friend for last eight years, when Aasna was helpless, clueless, departed from her soul from within. Where was he when she needed to understand the roles she fits in, where was this ‘friend’... Aarav?”, says Yash.

“What else would I have expected from a crackhead like you? Don’t you understand the difference between a friend and a lover? In a relationship, the bond is of two romantic friends who are willing to support each other at their best and their worst. Did you ever realize what Aasna was going through? You just knew about it and didn’t do a thing about it. And then there’s me. She wanted to go to Satpura, I crossed every limit to make it happen. She wanted to realize her true dream, when opportunity came, I gave her the confidence to believe in her aspirations. Seems like, I was a better lover as a friend, than you could have been her friend as a lover.”, says Aarav.

“Please calm down Yash and Aarav, you both are special for Aasna. She respects the love you both have for her.”, says Jaya.

“How long will she keep balancing the scale Maa? Aasna has the freedom to choose one man for her life, and if he has chosen me, no matter how much better Aarav is, who is he to change that decision of hers?”, says Yash.

“When did I ever force to change that decision? Yes... I never accepted this choice of hers, but I never raised my concerns about it. But now, I will change this decision. Because in your eyes, I don’t see any will to protect your love anymore. It’s not even the cocky young twenty year old lad, who was arrogant about his love. It’s a Yash, that is going to do anything to serve his ego. Even if it’s disrespecting a man as elderly as your father. Even if it’s disregarding the emotions of a person who is ready to give up anything for you, and in the end, ruin their life to live yours on your own terms. You are equivalent to Ravana of this age.”, says Aarav.

Yash didn’t like those words at all. He felt so agitated that he clinched his fists and looked towards his mother, as if he asking for her permission to literally punch Aarav in the face. Jaya nods, disagreeing to his anger. Yash looks down, eyes squinted, controlling his rage. Suddenly, he is reminded of something as he open his eyes wide. He starts grinning ear to ear thinking about it. Yash looks up towards Aarav gladly and speaks with a menacing twist.

“Aarav. You must be a fool. Do you really know what you’re fighting for? All these gospels you’re reciting to me, the efforts you are making to help your love win, all of this for a girl... whose mother did something to your mother that the world would have never apologized her for doing it.”, says Yash.

That was enough to send shockwaves into Aarav's spine. Even though he had no idea about what Yash was trying to say, he couldn’t believe he has brought his demised mother, Vedika into this. Jaya shuts her eyes close, realizing that her son has crossed the limit, and she can’t do anything about it. Does Yash really know about what happened years ago between Aarav and Aasna's parents? Did Atul tell him? If he did, this means Yash is now going to use it as a weapon to win this

argument at least! This is absolutely the lowest someone can ever go. Where is this verbal spat going to lead this two men? We have to see it!

The thunderstorm brewing outside changed its tune and has taken the form of a violent rainstorm. Dry leaves on earth is flying away and hitting windows and walls of the house. Loud thunderbolts stuns the people and stray animals walking outside trying to find a temporary shelter. As the rainstorm falls outside, the dimly lit dining room in Yash's house is in a state of sudden silence, after Yash breaks the hidden secret out to Aarav.

“What are you talking about? Garima aunty... did what to my mother? I won't fall for this.”, says Aarav, still in disbelief.

“Didn't your beloved father talk to you about this? It's a truth that has scared him for years. It really happened. The way Atul sir told me about it, his hands quivering, his eyes swelling up in tears of rage, sweat covering his fear struck face, I had to held his hands tight when he narrated me this tale.”, says Yash.

“What did he tell you? Yash I swear on my life if it's a false, made up story, there will be consequences.”, says Aarav.

“What has been told to you is a made up story Aarav. What I am going to say, is a true event, that changed everything between your parents and Aasna's parents. Hope you are strong enough to hear it.”, says Yash.

“Just say it Yash. I am ready to hear it.”, says Aarav.

“So here it is. The made up story is... your mother, Late Vedika Verma ji, may her soul rest in peace... died of cancer. Well, she never did.”, says Yash.

Aarav stepped aback catastrophically, shell shocked by what Yash said. He tried to convince himself this isn't true, but seeing the cruel determination in Yash's eyes, he couldn't ignore his words.

“Yash... what did you say? Do you have any idea how it's going to affect that child!”, says Jaya.

“Maa, he is a 28 year old man... he needs to know the truth of his existence. He needs to know how he came into this world.”, says Yash.

“What do you mean by my existence? Is it now about why and how I came to this world? Have I been told a lie all this time?”, says Aarav agonizingly.

“I am so sorry for you, but that’s the truth. Everything is linked with that one incident. Allow me to narrate it to you.”, says Yash.

“Yash, just say whatever you know.”, says Aarav.

“My pleasure. Ah... I mean... let’s hear it. Exactly when the year you were born, Mr. Rana was found guilty of his financial scams. His case was fought by your father, my mentor, Advocate Atul Verma. He lost the case. Garima aunty didn’t have any of it, she swore your father in front of many, how could Vedika aunty see all of that and do nothing? Both the ladies went into a heated conversation, and that led to Garima aunty lose her mind, and thrashed Vedika aunty across her face. She fell onto the floor, completely shaken of what just happened! Atul sir screamed in fear, did his best to hold her wife before she fell, but he couldn’t make it. Gaurav uncle was struck with shame, he ran away from the scene with his wife like a moron! Atul sir and Vedika had to leave the court, she again fell on stairs on the way down to the gates, because that day, it was raining heavily just like it’s raining right now, her legs slipped on the steps. You know why all of this was so concerning for her and Atul sir? Why was he crushed while speaking to me about this freak incident? Do you want to know? ”, says Yash.

All this time, Yash was enacting every moment in his narration like a stand up actor. He was completely mocking while revealing the harshest incident that took place between the parents, yet after his mock act, he looks at Aarav and grins menacingly. Jaya closed her eyes, and nodded her head in utter disbelief. Aarav also couldn’t transpire what evil has taken over Yash.

“Give me a break Yash. I beg you. All of this happened between them, and Papa never told me. Why didn’t he tell me?”, says Aarav in disapproval.

“I was going to answer that question. And the answer is... Vedika aunty was eight months pregnant, you were in her womb. She fell not once, but two times, when you were in there Aarav.”, says Yash.

Aarav couldn’t stand on his feet anymore. He sat down catastrophically on an adjacent chair. Jaya shocked herself, starts crying

for the helpless Aarav. Yash's menacing grin changes into a serious contemplation on his face. Aarav slowly holds his forehead, little migraines are kicking into his brain.

"Jaya aunty, can I have a glass of water?", says Aarav.

"Yes Aarav. I am... I don't know what to say.", says Jaya.

"No need to say anything Maa, he will listen to me. He has to. I am trying to make a point. Imagine if that incident wouldn't have happened, if Garima aunty wouldn't have hit your mother in front a crowd, everyone getting traumatized about you, the unborn you who could have... imagine if none of these events would have taken place, your father wouldn't have been so heartbroken that he had to leave this city. You would have forever lived here, known and would have been in a loving relationship with Aasna, nobody would have come between both of you, and I would have never met neither you nor Aasna. Everything would have been the way you wanted.", says Yash.

"Yash will you let Aarav have his pills at least? Or he won't do that either? What's wrong with you my son?", says Jaya devastated.

"Maa... I am just trying to prove that this distance between him and Aasna is created by their parents. The possibility of them getting together, has been narrowed down by his father, Atul sir who could have apologized Garima aunty after years the unfortunate incident happened, and Garima aunty, who could have let that suffering go and focused on Aasna's well being. But no, the world will blame me because I

am trying to protect that is solely mine.", says Yash, beating his chest, claiming his right on Aasna.

Aarav took his tablets, pushed the strip back into his shirt pocket, and rises up from his chair, with a slight determination in his eyes.

"Solely mine? Is Aasna or her feelings are a commodity that you have the right on it? Is that your love all about? You are trying to protect your so called love from a man who doesn't even know how the hell he came to this world. I have never seen my mother in real, but I am sure, she would have fought you the same way she did with Garima aunty if she was here. She fought for her love that day, she would have done for me too.", says Aarav.

“Fight me? Huh, in your dreams. I am neither whiny like Garima aunty, nor stubborn like my mentor.”, says Yash.

“Ah, disrespecting the mother of the woman you love, incredible. I can never be like you... because I was born to fight for my love just like my mother, and to make sure to replace the hardheartedness within our families, with love and respect, through my devotion for Aasna. If that's the purpose of my existence, I am sure if Aasna is told about it, she would do the same, fight for her emotions to not only be understood, but also do a great deed by helping herself come out from the misery you have put her in! And the world will blame you, because you should have understood Aasna's hardships more than anyone, even her parents.”, says Aarav.

“For once if you say that I don't care about Aasna again, I am literally going to rip your throat apart Aar..”, says Yash assertively, but he is interrupted.

“SHUT UP YASH! JUST BE QUIET! DON'T SPELL A SINGLE WORD FROM YOUR FILTHY MOUTH ANYMORE!!!!”, says Jaya.

Jaya had enough of his son hurling abuses and throwing disrespect at Aarav. She stopped Yash from speaking anything ahead, screaming agonisingly.

“Maa why are you stop..”, Yash stutters but again gets cuts in.

“Who the hell do you think you are? Are you Aasna's mate decided by the Almighty? I feel extremely strange how did she choose someone so uncultured, so uncivilized, an egocentric, a disrespectful man like you. What are you trying to prove, huh? That just because you sacrificed your dream of being a cricketer and become something I expected you to be and you even succeeding in it, puts you on the driver's seat of not just yours but anyone's life?”, says Jaya.

Yash stares at his mother in disbelief. Aarav's feet froze seeing Jaya revolt.

“Is this what I have taught you? Is this how I have nurtured you? Just for someone you are afraid to lose, rather than doing something about it, you are shoving disrespect at your elders, making this (points at Aarav) innocent kid feel vulnerable by revealing his disturbing past, how can you be so harsh? All I am seeing in your eyes is, the man I

hate the most, the carbon copy, of your father! The man who left us... no not you... I wasn't abandoned by my husband with this monster, it was a little, gentle and humble Yash, who would learn everything good his mother taught him. Where did that Yash go?", says Jaya.

"Maa... I am... still the same.. please don't... don't say I am... like that man... please!", says Yash remorsefully.

"Don't you dare call me that! A mirror reflection of that evil man won't address me as his mother! Never! Do me a favour... Leave me alone. You have made an image of me being the gatekeeper of your dreams for long, please erase that off my identity now. Do whatever you want. You are free now.", says Jaya.

Yash is absolutely devastated. He never expected his mother to react like this. Aarav nods his head in disapproval.

"Don't do this to me. I have worked so hard to be the son you dreamt of. I... I accept my mistake! Please apologize me Maa... please!", Yash pleads.

Jaya, heartbroken at the core, weeps incessantly walking back to her room. Yash fell on his knees trying to convince his mother apologize him for his behaviour. Yash starts crying out of immense pain. Aarav, moved by what he just saw, gives his final statement.

"This is not what I expected to happen. But if it has, I hope you have understood your mistake. If you keep feeling insecure about losing Aasna, then it only means... you are obsessed with her. And obsession is never love, it's the fear of losing someone, who serves your personal ego. Love is unconditional, unending... eternal. Nothing comes in its way, and even if it comes, love will win, no matter how greater the fear is. That's why, you have lost, and I have won, because from where I am looking at, I see a Yash destroyed by his arrogance. I had won this battle eight years ago, even twenty-eight years ago, and I still stand as a victor now.", says Aarav.

Yash couldn't stand those words. Already agonized by Jaya's anguish, Yash's teary eyes turns into red hot boiling pot, as he stands up, and speaks in excruciating throes, walking towards Aarav.

"You... you Aarav... you should have died the day your mother fell after getting thrashed by Garima aunty. Just because of your stupid

believe in your feelings, I have lost my mother's trust. After this... if you still

want to win Aasna from me... then I have only option... DO WHAT DIDN'T HAPPEN THAT DAY IN THE COURT!!!! YOU ARE DONE AARAV!!!!", Yash bawls.

Yash has lost his mind! He grabs a glass vessel on the table, breaks it pressing it hard by his hands, and runs towards Aarav to stab him with the broken glass! Aarav flinched as Yash came near him and the moment Yash raised his hands to pierce that glass into Aarav's torso, somebody stops him immediately from doing something that would forever tarnish his name.

It's Ayush! Ayush and Nitya have reached here at the right time. Both reached here few minutes ago, but after realising they were late, they stood near the entrance and heard the spat between Aarav and Yash. Ayush wrestles Yash down till he made him sit on an adjacent sofa! Nitya embraced Aarav tightly, in order to protect him and also, she was scared as hell that if they were seconds late Aarav would have been wounded terribly. Aarav just couldn't process anything. He stared at Yash with incredulity, unable to accept that he could go to this extremity.

"Nitya, take Aarav out of here now, I will take care of Yash.", says Ayush.

"But Ayush...", says Nitya concerned, but gets interrupted.

"Nitya just go with Aarav!", says Ayush cautioned.

Nitya adheres to her husband, and takes Aarav out of the house.

"Leave me alone! I will kill Aarav! He has ruined everything!", Yash blabbered.

"Shut the hell up! You are out of your senses! Stop this madness right now!", says Ayush.

"No I won't... I won't spare him anymore! Get out of my way Ayush!", says Yash.

Yash stood up to run into Aarav again, but this time Ayush slammed him back onto the sofa and slapped him hard to get him back to his senses.

“What is wrong with you dammit!? Yash, do you even realize what you’re trying to do? Will Aasna ever forgive you if you hurt Aarav? Do you think this how you can handle this situation? Look... look at your hand! It’s bleeding non stop! Will you please calm down and let me help you with that?”, says Ayush.

Yash looked at his right palm, it has been cut open by the broken glass he held tight. Looking at his crimson red hand, he has actually realized that he has completely messed it up. He laments, burst out groaning loudly. Yash planted his face on the blood soaked hand, rubbed his hands backwards, painting his face red and flipped his long hairs to the back of his head. Yash is grieving, traumatized about what he has turned into. The realization has finally kicked in.

Ayush didn’t speak anymore, himself walked into the kitchen to fetch some water in a utensil, and when he entered Jaya’s room for the first aid kit after being permitted by her to come in, Ayush finds her standing pressed on the wall. She was hearing everything what transpired after she left, and seems like she was so shocked, that all her emotions were swept away by her tears. She gives the first aid kit to Ayush, and sits down on her bed, feeling absolutely nothing. Ayush felt gutted seeing Jaya defeated like that, but he couldn’t do anything about it. Ayush went to treat Yash, meanwhile Nitya and Aarav stood outside this whole time under the verandah, as it is raining heavily outside.

“I can’t believe he resorted to this. We have shared our good moments, I have spent so many good memories with Yash, still he couldn’t help but be insecure about my friendship with Aasna. This hurts.”, says Aarav.

“I knew this was coming. We were hearing everything for few minutes, me and Ayush just couldn’t believe what we saw too.”, says Nitya.

“Unbelievable, right? I can’t understand, why Papa didn’t tell me about that incident. Is this the reason why I see hostility in Garima aunty’s eyes many a times? This is probably the reason why the path of Aasna bonding with me is next to impossible.”, says Aarav, slightly dejected.

“Don’t say like that Aarav. It’s never too late. And if you won’t convince Aasna to be with you, Yash might inflict the same torment

upon her as he did on you. Even thinking about it shatters my soul! Look Aarav, not every time, your second choice in love is like Ayush, who is going to love and respect you like you'd expect from your first. You just have to be the one, only one.", says Nitya.

"I get it... wait... what did you say? Ayush... a second choice? How was Ayush your second choice?", says Aarav.

"He knows... and he is completely fine with it. He respects it. But it doesn't matter. The one man I fell for before, loved someone else the way I could've have never loved him. So much that, he came back only for her.", says Nitya.

Aarav seemed perplexed, but then glared at Nitya, and from her gutted reaction, he had an idea about whom is she talking about.

"No, this can't be true Nitya. Did you...?", says Aarav.

He couldn't complete his words because he couldn't believe it. Nitya, who had already wrapped her hands around Aarav's arm, subtly kept her head on his shoulder, confessing her past feelings to Aarav.

"I didn't make a move, not because you wouldn't love me back, but because I believed you will never betray your feelings for Aasna and choose anyone over her.", says Nitya.

At this point Aarav is just amused that he is unaware of so many things related to him. He smiles and nods his head. He wipes away the tears on Nitya's face, caresses her mug as a pint of affection arose in his heart, realizing how true is Nitya's cupid for him.

"You could have confessed it, I was also resisting my feelings for Aasna. I could have been closer to you, and wouldn't have second doubted to be in your wedding.", says Aarav.

Nitya smiled hearing that response.

"Everything happens for a reason. I chose Ayush because I knew he will not only love me unconditionally, but he will also never doubt my loyalty for him. But in your case, Aasna will choose someone who doesn't trust her loyalty at all, always insecure of losing her. Will you let that happen Aarav?", says Nitya.

“Never. But it depends on Aasna. Even if she chooses me, Garima aunty might never acknowledge our relationship. Who’s going to change her mind?”, says Aarav.

“Me and Ayush heard it all, we didn’t intervene because Jaya aunty exploded at Yash. Who knows Yash is lying and trying to manipulate you?”, says Nitya.

“No. Yash might be manipulative, but he won’t lie. When your whole being is consumed by evil, you never make false statements. Now I have to confirm that all of it is true. How did I survive from that mishap that happened to my mother?”, says Aarav.

“If it’s true, think yourself to be blessed that you are still standing, and fighting for what’s right, and now, you have to know what’s the truth. Be brave, and make Atul uncle, Garima aunty, Gaurav uncle and whoever was present that day, tell you what happened. You deserve to know about it.”, says Nitya.

“Thank you Nitya. Your willingness for seeking my happiness because of your love for me, I wish I could give you something in return.”, says Aarav.

“Make Aasna realize that she has to choose you, and no one else. That would be my return gift.”, says Nitya.

Ayush comes out of the house, after giving first aid to Yash's hand and leaving him in his despair. As he sees Aarav and Nitya sharing a close moment, he doesn’t hesitate to smile and think that finally Nitya has confessed it to Aarav. When Aarav saw Ayush, he quickly distanced himself from Nitya, fearing Ayush would think otherwise. Ayush comes near, pats on Aarav’s shoulder and speaks.

“Don’t worry, you will be the last person in this world I would be suspicious about. Aarav, you must go back now. I am sorry for what happened here. This could have been avoided.”, says Ayush regretfully.

“Its okay, thanks to both of you, or else my lifeless body would have gone back home. Whatever my deity, Shri Krishna has written in my fate, has to happen. Now I need to seek the truth, or else, my existence wouldn’t mean anything. I have escaped death for two times now, I must know the reason.”, says Aarav.

Saying this, Aarav walks out determined, yet hurt in his heart about this night. This would be the day he will never forget in his life. Yash has let his inner insecurities eat up his soul completely and pushed him into such a dark place that even his mother doesn't want to be with him now. What will Aasna do in such a situation? Will she choose Aarav, who has certainly lit her dull life, or will she sacrifice her happiness, and help Yash come out of this misery he has put himself into? Will Aarav finally know the truth behind the hostility between his father and Garima, which was visible for years, but never known. Is it true that Vedika was pregnant when the infamous incident happened twenty eight years ago? The truth has to come out!

Aarav returns home, drenched in rain water, and an emotionless look on his face. Atul looked at his son, concerned.

“Beta, sab thik hai na? What did you tell Yash? Is everything alright?”, says Atul desperately.

“It’s been a long day Papa, let’s talk about it calmly. Did you have the dinner and your pills for the night?”, says Aarav.

“I was waiting for you my son.”, says Atul.

“Fine, we will have the dinner and talk about it.”, says Aarav.

“Why are you so dejected Aarav?”, says Atul.

Aarav smiles, just to show some sort of emotion on his face, not from his heart.

“Let’s talk about it as relaxed as possible.”, says Aarav.

“Sure. Go and change your clothes.”, says Atul.

As both father and son sit down for the dinner and have kadhi chawal made by Aarav himself in the morning, the charm of having good food was missing because of the tense situation. Atul leans in from his seat to ask Aarav the same question again, as he had fingers full of the curry and rice.

“Aarav, please tell me what happened between you and Yash.”, says Atul.

Aarav stops eating to answer his father.

“Yash... he tried to end my life today. A broken piece of glass vase, almost pierced into my chest, thanks to Ayush for appearing like a guardian angel and saving me.”, says Aarav.

Aarav smirked after saying this like Atul asked for a cricket match update. Atul's food slipped from his hand onto the plate, as he is shell shocked, completely in distraught after hearing those words.

“What? A glass... into your... chest? Did the argument escalate to this level? What did you say to Yash that he reacted in this manner? I

mean... it must have been right, something his egoistic mind won't accept but

still! Tell me what happened Aarav!", says Atul.

"The things he told me were way more worse than the things I said. I just told him who he is, a man who has to his arrogance. Disrespect is his language, disowning people for his self ego is his identity. Well, I showed him his identity, his mother Jaya aunty realized it too, but he showed me mine too.", says Aarav.

"Showed you, your identity? What are you talking about beta?", asks Atul.

"A truth which was never told to me, since my birth, its understandable. I couldn't have lived through it if I knew it as a child.", says Aarav.

Atul's heart skipped a beat. His eyes widened, and hands started shivering in disbelief. Aarav said it so effortlessly, like it didn't matter to him, kept eating his meal. But seeing his father paused like a statue in shock, he holds Atul's hands and speaks.

"Papa, let's do this. Tomorrow, please call Gaurav uncle, Garima aunty and Mr. Rana home. They haven't been invited here since ages. I want to learn the truth now. I have to.", says Aarav.

Atul nods, completely devastated. He starts sobbing incessantly.

"Yash, that evil man! I said it to him because I trusted him. He used my weakness, a truth that haunts me to this day... against you, my innocent son! Why would he do this? Just because you love... because, you love Aasna. Yash... oh you stone hearted man, screw you!", says Atul in agony.

"Calm down Papa, he wasn't pushed towards his true self when you told him the secret you all have kept from me since so long. Well it's time, to open a new case. I hope everyone will be here.", says Aarav.

"Aarav, please try to understand, we couldn't have told you the truth. And when you are a grown up man now, I didn't want to distract you from your prosperous life.", says Atul.

"I never experienced what it's like to be a mother's son. I am living alone and without my father, never available for him when he needs

me the most. I am going to lose the only woman I love to an evil man, what is so prosperous about my life Papa?”, says Aarav.

“I am sorry, I am sorry for giving you a life like this my son, I have failed you, I know it.”, says Atul sorrowfully.

“It’s not your fault Papa, since that day... that one day... my destiny was scripted to be like this. So I must know now... what happened on that day exactly, and then how did my premature self survive this catastrophe. I have to know.”, says Aarav.

“He only told you about the court day.”, says Atul with a sigh.

“Yes, is there more to it? I will know it tomorrow?”, says Aarav.

Absolutely no emotions were left in Aarav, he is definitely feeling betrayed.

Atul contemplates sadly, and makes a decision.

“Fine Aarav. Aasna's parents and Aniket will be here, and you will know the truth. And after all this, I won’t let that poor excuse for a man win the girl you love, and we all care for. I promise you Aarav.”, says Atul.

“Thank you Papa, let’s finish the meal and go to sleep, tomorrow is going to be a long day.”, says Aarav.

“I am sorry for whatever transpired tonight. Tomorrow, everyone will be here. You will know how you were... you were... no... no.. Aarav... promise me one thing.”, says Atul.

“Yes Papa. I will keep hundreds of promise for you.”, says Aarav.

“Stay strong when you hear the truth. And, never speak about it to anyone, unless you feel you can’t keep it in your heart anymore, say it to the person who will keep your trust responsibly. Do not repeat the mistake I committed.”, says Atul.

“I will try my best. Fine Papa, go and take some rest. And please don’t let this get the better of your health. I am just trying to know something I need to know. Do not take the stress, sleep well.”, says Aarav, holding his father's fist with care.

“With you by my side, nothing will happen to me my son. Aarav, keep in mind, the truth you are going to know, is the past. A better future

is ahead of you. My sole reason to be alive, is to shape that future into a blessing for you.”, says Atul.

“And you have done it well. Papa, you did the right by keeping the secret, but now let me know how did I come to this world, so that I can prove that I am worthy to be your son, and Aasna’s man.”, says Aarav.

Atul swells up in tears, rises from his chair, and hugs Aarav tight. He keeps sobbing on his shoulders, no matter how much Aarav is trying to calm him down. The truth to be told must be very painful.

“Aasna didn’t come out of the room last night and didn’t have her dinner too. She only showed up today morning. She came out with her phone, a slight grin on her face, and started crying out loud. When asked why are you crying, she said... *“I am finally relieved”*. Will anyone explain me what has happened? I am worried for my niece!”, says Aniket agitated.

Aniket, Gaurav and Garima are sitting in the drawing room, with and Atul and Aarav sitting together on the adjacent sofa. Everyone is in a tense state of mind, as Aasna’s parent too know what happened yesternight between Yash and Aarav, but not fully.

“I have never seen her crying so much, not even the day I raised my hands on her.”, says Garima.

“Raised hands on her? Why!”, says Aarav surprised, almost stood up from his place.

“Don’t worry Aarav. It was just a mere disagreement between a mother and a daughter. Aasna has let it go.”, says Gaurav.

“He is staggered because, he knows a thing or two about Garima Bhabhi losing her temper.”, says Atul.

“Wait what? What do you want to say Atul?”, says Aniket.

“Yesterday, Yash let the cat out of the bag. In the heated argument, and even trying to hurt Aarav physically in rage, he said everything that happened in the court that day.”, says Atul dejected.

Gaurav and Garima stared at Atul in disbelief. Aniket squints his eyes, nods his head in disgust. Aarav had a sarcastic look of amusement on his face.

“Aarav, are you okay? Why did Yash try to hurt you?”, says Gaurav.

“He couldn’t bear the fact that his mother disowned him for being an egotistical excuse of a human. But she is a mother, he doesn’t understand she will apologize him no matter what. What else could be more devastating for a mother, when your son turns out to be like your diabolical ex-husband.”, says Aarav.

Aniket opened his eyes, and for some reason stared at Aarav a bit angrily.

“That’s ridiculous! How could he think of hurting you Aarav! You have never hurt anyone. Unlike me, unfortunately.”, says Garima.

“Garima aunty, I want to know how did I survive from this disaster. That day you hit my mother, the anger was acceptable, the action wasn’t. The fact that she was eight months pregnant, it could have been avoided.”, says Aarav.

From here, his tone changed. Aarav becomes restless about knowing the truth.

“But after the second fall from the stairs, I shouldn’t have been standing here after three decades. How did it happen Garima aunty... Papa... would you tell me... Gaurav uncle... Mr. Rana, will someone tell me

how did I make it!”, says Aarav.

Both Garima and Atul sobbed quietly. They couldn’t see the pain in Aarav’s eyes. Aniket was contemplating this situation earnestly. Seeing the silence, Gaurav stands up and speaks with graveness.

“One doesn’t want to forget the disrespect her brother faced because of his crimes. One doesn’t want to forgive what happened to his wife. And one isn’t willing to speak here, because he knows he is the reason all of this mess began at first place.”, says Gaurav.

“Gaurav, I am quiet doesn’t mean I am not hearing. Do you want to say what happened to Vedika Ji, I am responsible for it? Of course I

am not. If Atul wouldn't have taken my case, the whole drama would have

never happened.", says Aniket.

"Bhaiya, you are not responsible for happened to Vedika Bhabhi, but for what Garima did, and what Garima has done forever. She made decisions that didn't come out of her mind on its own, but which was a product of your nefarious brain, all this time, even for my daughter.", says Gaurav.

"Are you out of your senses Gaurav? I have never thought or suggested anything wrong for Aasna! She is like my daughter... why would I do that?", Aniket retaliates.

"From the very beginning, the day you came out of the prison, you advised Garima to keep distance from Atul and anyone who is related to him. You even told her to make sure Aasna stays away from Aarav, but

I intervened and didn't allow that to happen, because our kids must not suffer for the mistakes we all made. Why would you think like that?", says Gaurav.

Aniket stands up from his seat, a bit angered, and speaks.

"Why... why would I think like this? For years... for twenty eight years, my sister has blamed herself for something she hasn't done. She has not been apologized for a mistake that was just a result of a mere anger. Atul alone has pushed her into a dark place, from where it would have been difficult for her to raise Aasna like that. Garima deserves to be apologized, and be asked for an apology because she was subjected to unwanted negativity for all these years.", says Aniket agitated.

This startled Atul and Aarav. Atul's eyes started boiling red hot in anger. Aarav through gesture advices Atul not to lose his temper. Garima feels the sudden animosity brewing between her husband and her brother and tries to intervene.

"Gaurav please...", says Garima but Gaurav interrupts her.

"No Garima, not today. Aniket Bhaiya, no matter what you feel for Garima, it's your job to tell the truth, because you are solely responsible for every action Garima has taken unmindfully, without

thinking for a split second, because you are equivalent to God for her. But you won't, so I will.", says Gaurav.

Gaurav turns around and walks up to a curious Aarav. His footsteps echoed in Atul's ears, he doesn't want his son to hear a single word of the secret kept for years, but he is not in a position to do anything now. Gaurav holds Aarav's shoulder tightly, trying to comfort him before the storm that is about to sweep Aarav's heart.

"What I am going to tell you is going to break your heart. We haven't just kept the truth from you, but we have lied you too, so that you never question your mother's death, ever.", says Gaurav.

Aarav gulps in, out of fear. He is not ready to hear it.

"So, after a few days of the infamous incident, Garima had some vomiting tendency for hours. At first we thought it was a bad stomach disorder, but upon check up we found out, she is a month pregnant with Aasna. I tried to give the great news to Atul, but neither Atul picked my calls, nor Garima ever let me convey the news to him. Those were the days of landline, he couldn't have picked up his phone readily anyways. I kept Garima's word, didn't tell Atul about Aasna, but the next day, he called me and Varun himself. He was desperate to meet us. Me and Varun met Atul, in the hospital. After that court day, Vedika Bhabhi had to be rushed to hospital because her labour pain reached its pinnacle. Doctors found out that... due to the falls, she suffered many injuries in her uterus, and Atul was given two options, either go for surgery which would have resulted in your... death... or through cesarean delivery bring you into this world and let Vedika Bhabhi go. After consulting her... Atul went for... for the latter... for your premature delivery. You were born on 2nd November, 2001, but both of you were in ICU. On 5th November, the day we met Atul, you became stable, and Vedika Bhabhi... breathed her last.", says Gaurav.

His heart sunk and Gaurav starts crying after revealing the truth. Atul has his face covered, because he is sobbing like a kid, completely heartbroken. Garima is also crying incessantly. Aniket shed a tear but didn't cry profusely like others, wiped it quickly off his eyes. But Aarav, he is crushed. He looked around in disbelief. His head started reeling, but he managed to keep himself composed. Aarav cries like a shattered man, not too loudly, not quietly. He doesn't speak a word. After the

devastating pause in the room, Aarav stumbles, but speaks controlling his emotions at his best.

“What... what on earth did I do in my past life, to come back and live like this? My birth took away my mother’s life, the only reason my father ever lived for. My existence has been a burden on people like Yash, and sadly Garima aunty and Mr. Rana too, who would have lived a happier life if they never crossed paths with Papa. And in this life, I can’t live with the woman for whom I would wish to be with... until the last star falls from the universe. All of this, for me... did I ever wish bad for anyone Gaurav uncle? If not, then why me... why only me!”, Aarav says in anguish.

Aarav cries like a fallen warrior, who lost a battle. This is painful for him.

“Curse me for my sins, because I took your mother away! I am a cursed soul, I must be punished!”, says Garima sorrowfully.

“Calm down Garima. He will never do that. Please calm down”, pleads Gaurav, as he hugs his wife sympathetically.

“Aarav, Vedika never died of cancer. You can kill me for lying about your mother’s death. But I knew you wouldn’t question it because cancer is something that cannot be treated, and the real reason would’ve shattered your peace of mind. I am sorry my son. *Mahadev!* Why did you give my son such a treacherous fate, why?”, cries out Atul.

Aarav couldn’t see Atul shattered. He wipes down his tears, hugs his lamenting father and pats his head to calm him down.

“Papa... no Papa... don’t break like this. Stay strong, because all I know is, that... you are the strongest man I have ever seen. I can’t even imagine being like you. Your devotion for Lord Shiva has paid off, the way you lived through this suffering, I can only say... I am blessed to be your son. I am truly blessed. I am blessed to be the son of an equally strong mother, who sacrificed her life for me. What Maa did for me, no mother would ever do for their children. She passed away, becoming the greatest mother of them all. Now I understand the true meaning of my existence, to live up to the greatness you and Maa have achieved as parents. I am honoured Papa, I really am. And that greatness will only be achieved, if I win in love, just like my parents, who from now on, are the epitome of love for me. But look at the

crossroads, the line between Aasna's and my heart, and our families have been drawn so harshly that it's nearly impossible for me to win her, even if she decides not to stay with Yash.”, says Aarav, disheartened.

“No Aarav, Aasna will definitely choose you just...”, says Gaurav but he is interrupted.

“She would never break his heart. And none of you will force her to choose me. Mr. Rana, perhaps, your animosity with my father has won. You have successfully separated our paths. Papa, there's no way, we can win over this family's trust, through marriage.”, says Aarav.

Everyone went completely silent. The truth in Aarav's statement crept in. Aniket has a little smirk under his palm which covered his mouth. Garima is unable to comprehend what has she done. Gaurav is in disbelief. A desperate Atul speaks up.

“Is there really anyway we can save that girl from making the wrong choice? I know the three of you won't go against her will now, after all those years Aasna suffered to live up to the expectations. If what Yash did yesterday with Aarav isn't enough to make her realize that she has made a mistake by being with him, what else would do it? Aasna... she is a pure soul. Gaurav... Garima Bhabhi, please save the girl you both have made sacrifices for and taken care for years.”, says a concerned Atul.

Who is going to do what Atul is pleading for- a guilt tripped Garima, a retaliating Gaurav... or a self seeking Aniket? Or is it Aasna herself, who's decision in the end is now not only going to decide the fate of her two lovers, but two families now. Will Aasna finally change her heart for Aarav, or succumb to the fate waiting for her?

Few hours ago...

Yash is seated on his chair in his room, ready to leave for court, his right palm bandaged, due to what transpired last night. He seems to be in sorrow, as he looked up towards the ceiling, tears flowing down from his eyes. He is holding his phone in his left hand. The call log shows his last call was of Aasna, which was a minute ago. Aasna calls him again, and Yash picks up the call, hesitantly. After hearing what Aasna said to him this time, he couldn't keep it hidden anymore, and started crying, but it seemed like tears of hope this time. Yash's moist eyes were suddenly beaming with glow. Though he still had some pain in his heart, whatever Aasna said has motivated him in some manner.

After the call, he quickly goes out of his room, and enters the drawing room, he slowly walks into the kitchen, and sees his mother, Jaya packing his tiffin for him.

"Yash, four puris and a box full of aloo ki sabzi, should be enough for your lunch. Do not eat from canteen, this is much better than your mess food.", says Jaya.

Jaya is acting like nothing happened yesternight. She herself said in distraught that Yash could leave her alone, but now she is making him a lunch, and a dish he loves the most. Yash didn't hold back, started sobbing like a kid. Jaya turns around and after seeing her son cry, leaves her work to console him.

"What is it Yash? Why are you crying like this now?", says Jaya.

"Maa, have you forgotten what happened last night? Have you really forgiven me?", asks Yash curiously.

"Look, things happen in life. What I saw last night, I will never forget that. But I knew when I wake up from the sleep, I will meet the same Yash who has been my right hand since childhood, the Yash I grew into a successful man, the Yash who has loved his mother beyond anyone in this world.", says Jaya.

Yash was feeling blessed and went on to hug his mother affectionately. Tears fell down Jaya's eyes, as she felt much relieved after apologizing her son for his grave mistake.

"You believed that your mother will forgive you, that's why I know you will always be my Yash, no matter what happens.", says Jaya.

"Well, it's the opposite. I thought you will never forgive me. I tried to hurt Aarav in rage, but I didn't want to end his life. I had that much sense for sure, but it was too much, too much to do for someone, who helped me be the son you have cherished for so long, and that someone is Aasna, who made me realize that you want me to be not just your ideal son, but the man, your husband couldn't be. I promise you Maa, I will be a better man. I will be one, for you.", says Yash.

"Such a nice girl, whoever will spend his life with her, is going to be blessed.", says Jaya.

"Sure it is. Seems like I am not that blessed. But I am, because I have a kind mother like you.", says Yash.

"Yes, you are bless... wait, what did you just say?", says Jaya.

"I said, I have a kind mother like you.", Yash answers.

"No, before that. What did you say Yash?", says Jaya.

"Oh, I replied to your statement, I am not that blessed...to live with Aasna forever.", says Yash.

Jaya is completely astonished by those words! This is the same woman Yash was ready to fight for against Aarav. Now, these words are coming out of nowhere. What made Yash say that?

Present time...

"Garima, we will speak to Aasna about this. It's about her life and it's us, her parents who have to take a decision.", says Gaurav.

Everybody is still edged with their emotions. Aarav is losing hope in every word his elders are speaking. Atul can see it in his son's eyes.

"Gaurav... you must allow Aasna to stay true to her feelings for Yash. She can't betray a boy who has done so much for her.", says Aniket.

"How do you know what Yash has done for Aasna?", says Gaurav.

"I don't need to know it in detail. Eleven years in a relationship, something must be very close between both of them. Do not ruin that bond for Aarav, who hasn't even tried enough to be our daughter's life partner.", says Aniket.

"Aarav has won her heart so many times that when he left this city eight years ago, Aasna has been dying to know about Aarav's well being. Every time she used to recall the times she spent with him when they became friends during their college days. Aasna has missed Aarav more than myself! I have seen it through my own eyes Aniket, think before you say anything.", says Atul.

"If that's the case, let's ask some questions to your beloved son.", says Aniket.

He walks towards Aarav, with a clear intent to humiliate him.

"So Aarav, a bright man as it seems from outside, you really love my niece, don't you?", says Aniket.

"I do, I love her. Aasna is everything I wished in a girl I would love, a woman I would love to spend my life with.", says Aarav.

"Great, does she know about your feelings?", says Aniket.

"She does. Aasna knows everything about my love for her, I didn't hold my feelings back for long.", says Aarav.

"She still doesn't realize your love, though she knows how you feel for her. Does that hurt you?", says Aniket.

"Mr. Rana, your niece has given me a bond that is beyond friendship. It is because she understands my feelings.", says Aarav.

"Beautiful. That's why she missed you so much. Did you miss her?", says Aniket.

"More than anything Mr. Rana. It wasn't easy to live through a single day without praying for Aasna's well being.", says Aarav.

"Well then, how many times did you message or call Aasna in these eight years?", says Aniket.

Aarav was staggered after this question was asked by Aniket, looks down and squints his eyes, realizing that the answer to this question is

really not going to help him at all. He still opens his eyes, but didn't look into Aniket's to answer him.

"Not much. Few messages on her birthdays or any occasion.", says Aarav regretfully

"Is that enough to understand what Aasna went through in these years when you weren't around?", says Aniket.

"No Mr. Rana.", says Aarav.

"So explain me Aarav, what have you really done for my niece, for which she will change her heart for you?", says Aniket.

There was awkward silence in the room for a moment. Aarav didn't utter a single word. Aniket is convinced that Aarav has no answer to this.

"Atul, do you see, your son is absolutely clueless about what he has done for Aasna. Gaurav, in this treacherous world, emotions do not matter, the effort does. Garima, I don't want Yash to marry Aasna, but her decision matters the most.", says Aniket.

"When did her decisions, her choices ever matter to you bhaiya? You made Garima and unfortunately me believe that the path you decided for Aasna was right, we made her believe that, and it was a touchwood that she succeeded in her attempts, but we did nothing but slowly poison her true dreams.", says Gaurav.

"It was necessary, to put her on the right track in life. Yes... I agree she faced a lot of setbacks. But look, now she has finally worked hard for her real dream and has a wonderful career ahead of her. She is doing what she wants, unlike Aarav, who neither became what he wanted to, nor he has done enough to be with his love.", says Aniket.

Atul looks at his son eagerly, he couldn't hear a single word against Aarav anymore. He wants his son to speak something for himself, and finally Aarav mugs up the courage to do so.

"You are correct Mr. Rana. I didn't do much to win over Aasna's heart. I didn't confess to her about my feelings forcefully thinking I solely had the right to do it. I waited, I waited for her to trust me, be my friend, took her to her favourite place, those beautiful mountains, the serene river, the joyous village, and only spoke for my love when she

asked me about it. Yes I didn't do enough to realize what was she going through these eight years, when I was miles away from all of you. I messaged her occasionally, the conversation would end in minutes on text, but I would continue talking to her as if she was right in front of me. All I had to do was close my eyes, and Aasna came right in front of me. Some days I would be so happy by convincing myself that she was doing fine. Some nights I would cry in agony realizing I really didn't have any knowledge about her well being. The fear that, that she would feel conflicted again the moment I speak about my longing penance for her all this time, kept me from calling her, hearing to her hardships. She resides in every fiber of my being Mr. Rana. I never needed her to be there for me, she was right here in my heart. I came back for her, having the opportunity to see Aasna after years, I had to come back. But all I came back for was to see her happy. And I knew... Yash hasn't been able to make her feel secure about her life and had made Aasna falsely believe that their relationship will end all their miseries. I had known that from the day I left this place, when he said that he wants to win a woman like Aasna, someone his mother will whole heartedly accept. Sounds pretty but I am sorry Mr. Rana, Aasna is not a possession. To show his mother that he has brought a beautiful girl to the house, is like showing the world that you have won a lottery. Aasna will not be treated like this. If you truly love a person, you must win them for their happiness. You should not see them as a reward but as a responsibility. That is the definition of what true love in my dictionary. And if Aasna is going into that kind of relationship, that means Yash has some expectations from her. But when things don't work out as he expects, he hates it. If my mere presence in Aasna's life is provoking him to hurt me, just imagine what he would do if Aasna fails to live up to his expectations. Just because she is a blessed girl, everyone has kept expectations from her. Unfortunately, even my father expects her to change her heart for me. In this entire world, it's only me, who doesn't expect anything from Aasna, just wish that she becomes mine, and selflessly keep her happy for the rest of my life. And the best part is, she knows everything. That's why she talks about *eternal love* on a radio show. Aasna knows my heart lives for her, and my soul will die for her. She is just too loyal for Yash, that's how she has been brought up by her wonderful parents. After this, if anybody feels that I haven't done enough for her, then I have no issues Mr.

Rana. You may still believe in it, I will keep believing in this power of love.”, says Aarav.

Aniket is dumbfounded after those words from Aarav, as he tries to look away from him. Atul looks at his son proudly, a tear in his eyes and a smile on his face. Gaurav and Garima are astonished, yet feel blessed after Aarav’s reply. Garima, who was quiet for a long time, speaks to Aarav.

“I don’t know how I can ask for an apology to you and your father, it’s me who snatched away the motherhood you deserved to have.”, says Garima.

“You never did it Garima aunty, you rather showed me how great of a mother you are once. Remember how you didn’t allow a five year old me and Aasna go down the hills, in fear that you will lose us. How caring was that gesture. You don’t need to regret for anything Garima aunty.”, says Aarav.

“That was the same day Atul didn’t forgive Garima for what happened in the court. Imagine keeping animosity for something my sister was not at all responsible.”, says Aniket ignorantly.

“My father couldn’t, of course he is a man who loved his wife whole heartedly. I will do what he couldn’t, for the woman I love. I forgive Garima aunty, and I ask for forgiveness in return for she has felt so much regretful all this time. Mr. Rana, if this is what I had to do for yours and Garima aunty’s peace of mind, I have done it. Now please, protect Aasna from making the wrong decision. I understand we cannot go against her, but we can surely make her realize that she is on the verge of destroying her life. I do not want this to be done for me. I will be happiest man in the world, if Aasna finds happiness in her life. For that, she has to leave Yash. She will find solace with you all, her work, and be happy. That’s all I want.”, says Aarav.

Atul just couldn’t believe how selfless Aarav is. He remembers this is how selfless Vedika was. A proud father smiled and sobs quietly yet happily for his son. Gaurav gazed at Aarav with a beaming smile and speaks.

“Do not worry Aarav. She will choose you. Aasna knows your love needs to be fulfilled.”, says Gaurav.

“But how will she choose me over Yash, please explain it to me Gaurav uncle?”, asks Aarav humbly.

No one answers him right away. Gaurav had the answer, but he waits for the right time. Atul seemed to lose hope, he looks out of the main door, and sees something unexpected. A car stops right in front of the main gate of his home. From one backdoor comes out Perna, from the front seat comes out Tanuja, Varun comes out of the car from the driver’s seat, and from the other backdoor comes out Aasna. She walks in as Perna and her parents stood near the gates, looking into the main hall with eyes of content.

“Beta, maybe the answer has arrived here itself.”, says Atul.

Aarav, Gaurav and Garima see Aasna walking towards the door with some hope. Aniket looks down and squints his eyes in disapproval. Aarav walks upto Aasna, steadily wondering about Aasna’s unexpected arrival. Atul pats Aarav shoulder, to make him feel a bit comfortable. Aarav acknowledges that gesture of his father with a nod, steps out of the main door, and stands on the yard as Aasna closes in towards him. Both look into each other’s eyes. Aasna’s eyes are soaked up with tears. Aarav feels concerned as he starts speaking.

“Aasna, are you alright?”, says Aarav.

“What do you think? How I should be feeling right now?”, asks Aasna.

“I understand, you are stressed because of what happened last night. I couldn’t just let Yash disrespect my father like that.”, says Aarav.

“How can you be so compassionate?”, says Aasna.

“Um... I didn’t get it.”, says Aarav.

“Yash just made you feel so helpless with that revelation last night, but you are still thinking about what he told to Atul uncle. You got to know everything about your birth, you were still concerned about me. Even after knowing how my mother’s action unfortunately led to Vedika Ji’s demise, you still love me. How do you do it Aarav?”, says Aasna, sobbing in gratitude.

Aarav is in disbelief after realizing even Aasna knows about it. Atul looks at Gaurav surprised, and Gaurav nods his head towards Varun, as Atul turns his head towards his elder brother now. Varun agrees

that he was the one who said it all to Aasna just now. Aarav feels humbled by Aasna's question and replies her.

"Aasna, have you not been this compassionate all this time? Everyone kept having expectations from you and you tried your best to meet it, without refraining. Can I not be a little bit selfless for you?", says Aarav.

He tries to comfort Aasna, but she is determined to serve her never ending curiosity, which has always been Aarav's favourite thing about her.

"I wasn't compassionate, I was lost. I had a path in front of my eyes, and I kept walking on it without thinking if I will make it or not.", says Aasna.

"That makes you even better than me! I lost hope, I left you and everyone, but came back when I was unable to lead a life without you and the moments I cherished with you. You are way stronger than me.", says Aarav.

"The ones who suffer, are the strongest. But the agony has to end when the time comes. You ended mine. I am here to end yours.", says Aasna.

Aarav is a bit staggered after hearing that.

"What... What do you mean Aasna?", asks Aarav cautiously.

"Yash called me few hours ago.", says Aasna.

"Wait, Mr. Rana said you were crying incessantly, holding the phone in your hand, this morning. Was he the reason?", says Aarav.

"Yes he was.", says Aasna.

"What did he say?", says Aarav.

"Are you ready to hear it?", says Aasna.

"What is it Aasna? Please tell me.", says Aarav.

"I didn't come out of my room since last night I was so upset. I did sleep late but woke up early, I finished my morning routine and the moment I sat down on my study table to drink some water, Yash calls me. I receive the call, and this is how our conversation go.", says Aasna.

Aasna swiftly picks up her call, enraged, as she is ready to hear from Yash.

“Hi Aasna. How are you doing?”, says Yash.

He sounded low, as if he was in distraught, because of himself.

“Do you really need to ask me that. Get to the point Yash.”, says Aasna.

“You must know what happened last night.”, says Yash.

“I do, and I am not happy.”, says Aasna.

She was so stressed by the situation that she started sobbing right after speaking those words.

“I am responsible for this. I couldn’t keep calm on my rage. I am sorry.”, says Yash.

“You shouldn’t be asking for forgiveness to me but Aarav. You tried to stab him in the chest, you... the one who said he will never hurt me no matter what! Why Yash?”, says Aasna.

“I thought...”, says Yash but Aasna cuts in.

“You thought that Aarav has taken away everything from you? Yash, he is the most selfless being in the world. He never let his love come in the way of our relationship. That doesn’t mean he can’t fulfill his love through his friendship. He just helped me achieve my longing dream.”, says Aasna.

“I understand, I was frustrated that it wasn’t me. Matter of fact, I couldn’t do it because I felt you and me, were destined to face such hardships in our path to a successful life. But I forgot, unlike me, you never chose that path yourself, you were put into this.”, says Yash.

“And did you think I will make it? Succeed in something I never chose for myself?”, says Aasna.

“Yes I did think you will make it, just like me. Everyone knows I never wanted to be a lawyer, but I have excelled in this profession now. I thought one day, you will too flaunt being a civil servant.”, says Yash.

“Maybe that’s why being a teacher is important. They understand who is capable to be what and what not. They will guide you in the right direction, rather than expecting you to succeed in something you aren’t meant for. I chose to be one, I will forever be one.”, says Aasna.

“Aarav is a teacher too, and he taught me the same thing.”, says Yash.

“What did he teach you? What you are capable of?”, says Aasna.

“No, rather what I am not capable of.”, says Yash.

“What is it?”, says Aasna, with a concerning tone.

“I am not capable of being the man you need. I am absolutely not. I have known every little thing about you, your hobbies, your favourite sport, subject, meal, song... which is my ringtone. I know everything about you, except... what you were actually going through all these years.”, says Yash.

Aasna didn't say anything, just lowered her head, accepting the bitter truth.

“But then there's Aarav, who knows almost nothing about your personal life, yet knew exactly what you needed all this time. Miraculous right?”, says Yash.

“Why are you saying all this Yash?”, says Aasna.

Aasna agrees with Yash, but she seemed to realise something much deeper.

“I am saying it because I have realised that Aarav is one determined man. I thought he is a failure, from failing to do what he wanted to do in life to not being able to win your love. But when he didn't flinch an inch when I charged at him with the broken piece of glass, I understood why his love, is much more stronger than mine.”, says Yash.

Aasna is shocked to death, she never expected Yash will ever sing praises for Aarav.

“But he has lost so much. The motherly love, the merry childhood. Atul sir must have had so many hardships raising him without a wife. With all that, he has also lost his emotional and healthy self. God knows how many doses of aspirin he takes in a day.”, says Yash.

“The day you told me he has a tendency of migraines, I called Atul uncle just to enquire about his health, but he said its not his mental health, but his heart suffering being distanced from his love. I had to cheer him up, so I thought about voicing my remedy through a radio

show, which I knew Aarav will hear, and guess what... he did.”, says Aasna.

Yash is amused hearing Aasna having such solicitation for Aarav.

“You have always been so protective of Aarav. I should have realised that before speaking to him like that.”, says Yash.

“Aarav is the best thing happened to me, after you accepted our relationship back when we were in high school. He has done so much for me by doing nothing much for me. His little efforts have done wonders for me. I can’t be thankful to him unless I live every day, every minute of my life with him.”, says Aasna.

“Do you want to thank him for all his efforts?”, says Yash.

“I do.”, says Aasna.

Yash takes a deep breath, stares at his watch kept on adjacent table, and says the words he never thought he will say to Aasna.

“From 0812 hours, consider yourself free from my incapable love. I am happy that we came this far. You and Aarav, just seems right. I can’t hurt him anymore. I am not an evil man, a bad son. I won’t keep you in my shadows any further. Aasna is Aasna, when she is either with herself, or with Aarav. With me, you know that you have tried hard to be someone you are not. From now on, you are going to be Aasna, only Aasna. Thank you for everything.... everything.”, says Yash.

Aasna just couldn’t believe that Yash has said it. She didn’t say anything, cuts the call, and keeps her phone down. Aasna’s emotions get the better of her, as she plants her face in her palms and starts wimpering. She has never cried this much in her entire life. Yash on the other side, had his face up towards the ceiling, crying quietly, as tears rolled down from his eyes.

This is the end of Yash and Aasna’s relationship. This couldn’t be any better. Yash’s humility has finally paved the way for Aasna realizing her love for Aarav. How will Aarav react to this revelation now?

Aarav's heart beats could be heard loud as he looked at Aasna astonished. He is not being able to believe that he is seeing an Aasna, who is no more in a relationship with Yash. He is looking towards an Aasna who is ready to give her heart to him. He is in a state of shock that he has never been in one. But inside, he is feeling mesmerized, a happiness he hasn't felt in a long time. Yet, he asks Aasna to believe this completely.

"Aasna, he just can't break up with you like that, on a phone call. It's wrong." , says Aarav.

"His heart was sunk deep in regret, do you think he wants to face me right now?" , says Aasna.

"Still, Yash should have met you before making such a hasty decision." , says Aarav.

"It was a long time coming, he realised I wasn't happy with anything in life, which included this relationship. We had to separate one day, but I never expected it would be like this." , says Aasna.

With every word she spoke, Aasna sobbed harder, because she is still in disbelief about all the events that happened since last night.

"I am sorry. It shouldn't have happened this way." , says Aarav.

"I can't believe it really happened though. But you know what Aarav, I am feeling a lot better, like a huge burden has been lifted off my heart." , says Aasna.

"Its certainly the burden you took on yourself for years trying to change your life around. Life doesn't change by unwilling efforts we make Aasna, it's all the plan of the almighty. If Krishna Ji wanted us to reunite, it had to happen." , says Aarav.

"Does He want us to be together... forever?" , says Aasna.

Aarav smiles, looks around, sees into the eyes every other person seeing or hearing them. Convinced, he speaks to Aasna.

“I don’t know about Him, but as I look around, most of the people here want it. I can see it in their eyes. But what matters is... do you want us to be together?” , says Aarav.

Aasna weeping in disapproval turns into tears of hope and acceptance. She is still crying, but the shift in her emotions is visible. Aasna has felt the urge in Aarav’s heart numerous times, but she was never in a position to help him. Now, when Aarav is trying to resist himself from something he was eluded for years, Aasna makes her mind to help Aarav realize the truth now, which is going to change both of their lives. Her hands clenched into fists, she takes a resolute step forward, her eyes locked onto Aarav with a newfound sense of purpose.

“This was always about your love Aarav. It’s you who fell for a girl, who was never loved back, until she was attracted to a man who had everything to be an ideal partner. But who knew, my ideal partner will become so possessive for me, that he would try to destroy every hope of yours, who loved me, when nobody did. And just like that, when nobody tried to understand what I wanted, it was you, who was miles away, and someone who decided won’t come back just because he didn’t want me to fight with my own heart over two men who love me the most; it was you who gave me the hope and helped me realize my dream. You wrote this story Aarav. Now you are asking me if I want us to be together or not? I accept this tale, the way you have written it, the way the almighty has bestowed us with. I accept it... I accept your love.... I accept... you.” , says Aasna.

Aarav is enthralled, exhilarated by those words of Aasna, so much that his smile turned into tears busting out of happiness. He looked down and cries incessantly, but the grin didn’t fade from his face. His father Atul, looks up, joins his hands, and thanks his god, *Mahadev* for showing him this incredible sight. Gaurav and Garima embrace each other ecstatically seeing their daughter making the most gutsy decision of her life. Aniket smiles and shrugs off his shoulders, as he had no control over this now, accepts his defeat ignorantly. Varun seems content, Tanuja blesses the two kids by her adorable gesture, which apparently “casts off evil eyes”. Prerna is feeling so happy that she wanted to hug both of them tightly, but waited for the next moment, something she has wanted to witness for long. Aasna holds Aarav’s palms, as she speaks.

“I think I can say this to you now... I love you. I really do.” , says Aasna.

“I... I love... I love you too.” , says Aarav.

As the first ray of sunshine of the day falls on the merry faces of two lovers after relentless showers since last evening, Aarav and Aasna finally embrace each other whole heartedly, realizing their love for once and for all. Aarav has finally accepted the reality of the moment and is mesmerized after feeling the tenderness of Aasna's yearful form. Aasna can feel the warmth, the pleasure of the love Aarav kept in his heart for years. As Aasna hugs Aarav, eyes closed trying to feel Aarav's love for her, Aarav looks up into the sky, thanking every power in the universe who brought them together after everything that they went through.

A mobile phone rings in an office, filled with loads of files on table, cupboards all around the room, two windows for ventilation, and a ceiling fan which spins like a cart wheel. On a chair adjacent to the table is a man seated, reading daily report on a village he has been posted in. It's none other Ramchand, now a Block Pramukh for the block which includes the village of Satpura and also a city. As he heard the phone ring, he picks it up immediately.

“Good morning minister saab! The files are ready, will mail it to your office tomorrow!” , says Ramchand.

“Arey... I am not a minister. But is this Block Pramukh Mr. Jajati Ramchandra I am speaking to?” , says Deepak.

Deepak has visited the hills and standing on high cliff, so that he can get the best network to talk to Ramchand.

“Oh, yes... this is Jajati Ramchandra. Who is this?” , says Ramchand.

“I am Deepak Joshi. I am speaking from the urban area of your block.” , says Deepak.

“Ji... Any queries? How may I help you?” , says Ramchand.

“Well, this is a personal favour, will you do it for us?” , says Deepak.

“At your service 24/7. Let me know what can I do for you.” , says Ramchand confidently.

“I heard that you have a beautiful horse in your village. His name is Sirsa, right?” , says Deepak.

Ramchand instantly realises who he is talking to, and stands up in anticipation.

“Are you... are you related to Aarav Ji?” , says Ramchand.

“Ji! Don’t give him so much respect sir. He is my friend.” , says Deepak.

“Oh wow! I am glad to hear from you! How is he doing? How is his friend Aasna Ji?” , says Ramchand.

“Calm down sir. You will be glad to hear what I have called you for. You see... there’s a wedding coming up. So we need a horse to help our groom reach the wedding hall quickly. He specifically wants the horse in your village to be a part of Baraat procession.” , says Deepak.

“I will do anything for Aarav and Aasna. Since their visit to our village, it has been blessed with happiness and prosperity.” , says Ramchand.

Deepak takes a deep breath and gives our Pramukh the news that will make his day.

“It is the wedding of yours truly, Aasna and Aarav. Aarav wants Sirsa and you to be a part of this marriage ceremony. You are cordially invited.” , says Deepak.

Ramchand was thrilled after hearing the news! He couldn’t believe the fact that it is the second time he is hearing about these two people, and it’s about their marriage! Ramchand prayed for this and it happened. He grabs the phone with his other hand too in excitement and starts speaking.

“This is the greatest news I have ever heard! I am grateful that they still know about me, this village and our beloved Sirsa, and remembered us for such a beautiful occasion. This is a blessing for me. On what date is the wedding happening?” , says Ramchand.

“Its on July 17th ... do you have WhatsChat? I will send you an e-card on it.” , says Deepak.

“Yes sir. You can send it to this number.” , says Ramchand.

“Alright sir... We will be delighted to have you and your pet horse.” , says Deepak.

“Sure, you have no idea how happy I am. Thank you so much for this invitation!” , says Ramchand.

“Its my pleasure. Have a great day sir.” , says Deepak.

“Same to you sir. Jai Shri Krishna!” , says Ramchand.

Both the men cut the call. Ramchand is literally jumping joyously hearing the news. On the hills, Deepak keeps his phone back in pocket, and gazes back at the person who has come with him. It's Sarika. She is mesmerizingly playing with the flowers in the bushes. Deepak realizes he has an opportunity.

“Aarav and Aasna are getting married, can you believe it? I just can't.” , says Deepak.

“I always knew they will end up together one day. I am so happy for Aasna. This is the place that united them, and the universe decided to never break this bond, no matter where they are in their lives. This is a beautiful place indeed.” , says Sarika.

“Aarav was once day dreaming about this place, and he said... these ranges speak to him. These winds, the river, the nature, everything here makes him feel beautiful, as he stretches his hands and feels all of it.” , says Deepak.

Deepak throws his hands in the air, trying to enact what Aarav felt on that day in college. Sarika understood he was acting.

“Aarav can feel it. He is a thoughtful person, how can you feel such things? Tell me.” , says Sarika mockingly.

“Aarav also felt like it was her dream girl, who is going to become his wife in the days coming. It is Aasna who makes him feel so blissed. Without her, he wouldn't have felt all that. Sarika... I think... I do feel like that too.” , says Deepak.

Sarika stands up on her feet, walks up to Deepak, in the beautiful florescent blue frock she is wearing, making Deepak bit nervous.

“Who is it... who makes you feel this way? Please tell me Deepak.” , asks Sarika cheekily.

Deepak is terrified, but builds up his courage... and speaks to Sarika. He knows it's now or never!

"I carry something in my pocket since last year... I wanted to give this to someone then, but couldn't... it was a fateful day." , says Deepak.

"What is it Deepak? Better not be a prank!" , says Sarika.

"No it's not. Trust me." , says Deepak.

Deepak reaches his hand into his pocket, where he kept the ring he wanted propose Sarika with last year. He takes it out, and keeps it closed in his fist.

"Come on now show it Deepak." , says Sarika.

"Sarika... I don't know if I am feeling the way Aarav feels here, but what I feel, wherever I go, is loved. I just feel wonderful when I am around this person. I wanted to do give it to that special one." , says Deepak.

Sarika is bit staggered. She never thought Deepak will fall in love. If he had to, her heart just didn't accept he would fall anyone. She asks him gravely about the gift.

"So... who do you want to give this to? And what is it? May I know Deepak?" , says Sarika.

Deepak smiles, and reveals the gift to Sarika. Sarika is flabbergasted by how precious the ring looked.

"That's beautiful Deep... who are you going... no way." , Sarika stumbles, as Deepak kneels down in front of her.

Deepak eyes turn moist, and as he smiles... he says it, without any hesitation in mind.

"Sarika, it was here, when I realized you can be more than a introvert girl, who doesn't talk to anyone. But way before that, I realized one thing, and that is you, to me, the most beautiful woman I have ever been around. The little things you do, play with your hair, dance in a sangeet, everything makes me fall in love with you. I am not Aarav, I can't give a long speech on my confession, you trust me, I love you... will you marry me... just like our best friends will?" , says Deepak.

Sarika is awestruck. She kneels down and cries so hard that Deepak thought she has been possessed. But something just vented out of her, as she starts speaking.

“You... moron! How can someone fall in love with this boring girl? I have forever been in my parent’s or Aasna’s shadows, I preferred being in that closed place. You tried your best to give me my own shed, and be independent. As you made the efforts, you fell in love. You are so silly Deepak. I love you too idiot!” , says Sarika.

Both hug each other tightly! Such a beautiful moment is this. Another love story found its satisfactory ending. It’s beautiful how it’s always about the little efforts to make the lives of ones you love better, and not to have them or have a right over them.

Pipers are blowing in rhythm all again, the dhols are being played ecstatically, crackers are being burst in the night sky. A beautiful palace is decorated elegantly, lit up with luminous glass lamps. In the middle of beautiful scenery and the celebrative atmosphere, three people are seated around a small ritualistic bonfire. One is the learned priest, calling out hymns and pouring ghee into the bonfire for the fulfillment of the ritual. And beside him, Aarav and Aasna are seated. They are dressed up well, emotionally carried away, tying the knot to live together for the rest of their lives. They are surrounded by their parents, Atul, Gaurav and Garima, watching their children marrying each other happily.

Family members which include Varun, Tanuja, Prerna and Aniket stand in unison, watching the two souls unite for ages. Yash and Jaya stand adjacent, merrily watching what they lost for the greater good. Ayush, Nitya, Deepak and Sarika are also here, one of the couples is reminded of their marriage, and the other is manifesting it. From a safe distance, stand Ramchand, Miss Madhuri, Mr. Anupam... and Mr. Malhotra... who have come to bless the eternal soulmates.

In a delightful moment, as Aarav puts the sindoor on Aasna’s forehead, Aasna says something to Aarav.

“Put the sindoor, as long as you can, you will live a long life Mr. Verma.” , says Aasna.

“I can’t ask for a life longer than you, so spare me, Ms. Sharma... I mean... Mrs. Verma.” , says Aarav.

These little things is all that makes both of them more happier than any materialistic reward in this world. This is a pure love.

As Aarav and Aasna rise up to walk around the holy bonfire for seven times, to solidify this unbreakable bond for the next seven lives, everyone pours down handful of marigold petals on them. Ranjit and Arun fill both of their hands up and throw the petals joyously, until Perna ordered both the boys to maintain their composure. Atul is teary eyed, and could feel Vedika seeing this sight ever happily. Mr. Malhotra pats on his shoulders, and both hug each other.

“Mr. Malhotra, thank you for letting my son fulfill the greatest dream of his life. Your motivation helped him achieve his love.” , says Atul.

“No. Mr. Verma. Please don’t underestimate the power of your love here. Your love for your wife, and your son, helped the universe to work accordingly, and bring those two love birds together. How beautiful is it, that the two men who helped Aarav win his love, met similar fates in love.” , says Mr. Malhotra.

“For years that loss felt heavy, but today, I feel relieved. I believe Vedika will find utmost peace now.” , says Atul.

“I feel the same today Mr. Verma. I feel just like you do.” , says Mr. Malhotra.

Both the elderly men embrace each other again, feeling absolutely blessed. Atul and Malhotra feel like their unfortunate love has finally been fulfilled. The time for comes. Gaurav and Garima hug their daughter tight, bless her teary eyed. The tears of happiness fell on Aasna’s shoulder like a blessing. Aasna goes on to take blessings from Aniket, who hugs her niece affectionately, though being dejected about this occasion. Aarav takes his blessings from Gaurav and Garima, hugs them with care, then goes to Aniket. Aarav touches his feet, Aniket pats Aarav’s head, but refrains from hugging him, caresses his face let’s him move ahead. Aarav smirks amusingly at this act of Aniket, as Garima nods her head in disappointment. Atul embraces Aarav and Aasna, so emotionally as if he felt he is embracing Vedika. He goes on to bless his kids with grace. Then the person who stood in the queue shook the newly wed couple a bit. It’s Yash.

He looks at Aasna, absolutely pleased to see her in a version he expected to see her in for him, but he didn’t regret it. He then gazes at

Aarav, smiles happily, but lowered his head down, as he couldn't get the courage to look into Aarav's eyes. Aasna chins him up, nods her head with moist eyes, telling him to not to feel downhearted, as she hugs him tightly, for one last time. Yash sobs quietly, kisses his fingers, which is covering Aasna's head fondly. As they move away from each other, Aarav couldn't hold it in anymore, and embraces Yash gratefully, thanking him for making a sacrifice he will never be able to repay for. Yash wraps his arms around Aarav, and this time plants his face on his shoulders to hide his tears, repenting his actions a year ago. This is truly wholesome.

After receiving everyone's blessing, Aarav and Aasna are set to leave the mandap, in style. Ramchand stood firmly beside his breathtaking beauty Sirsa, all ready for its next trip. Two saddles are placed on the horse's back. Aasna goes and sits on the first saddle, and Aarav goes on to sit behind her. Sirsa knows these two people well, and doesn't make them feel uncomfortable. Everyone was mesmerized to see the married couple getting the royal treatment. Aarav cannot believe that he sharing such an amazing moment with Aasna, but she is bit cautious with the horse. Aarav wraps his arms around hers, holds Aasna's fist, and both grab the rein with absolute care, making sure they don't hurt Sirsa. Sirsa taps his leg steadily, and starts walking gently ahead. Perna captured the incredible moment in her phone, and others watch Aarav and Aasna riding on the horse, happiest they have ever felt. Ramchand decided to walk beside Sirsa, and Deepak walked with them to help them reach home. He is glad to see his best friend marry the girl he loved from day one, dreamed of a day like this with Sarika. Others followed the new husband and wife, making sure the king and the queen stay ahead of everyone. The beautiful day, and an unforgettable saga of love, reaches its desired end, as a new chapter begins from here.

From a distance, Gaurav glanced over his brother in law, Aniket, with a pale face, staring at Yash and Jaya. Gaurav, with a smirk on his face, walks towards him and speaks to Aniket.

"Bhaiya, some pairs are made in heaven, like Aarav and Aasna. But some relation, once broken, never get resolved, ever... like yours... and Jaya.", says Gaurav.

~ The End ~