

Coffee@2p.m.

ASHISH KUMAR JAIN



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Preface

Every story begins with a spark.

Mine started with a cup of coffee during a college exam—a fleeting moment when the dream of writing a book took root in my heart and never let go. Years passed. Life happened. I became a Finance Manager by profession, a wanderer by soul, and an artist in stolen moments. But the dream persisted, whispering in the quiet spaces between balance sheets and mountain escapes.

Then, a single conversation with a friend changed everything. It was time to stop waiting for "someday" and pour my heart onto these pages. And so, *Coffee @ 2 p.m.* was born—a story about love, but also about the invisible threads of fate that pull us toward the people who change us forever.

Love is the most unpredictable magic.

It defies logic. It thrives in the unlikeliest places. And sometimes, it finds you when you're least prepared—like a chance meeting, a glance across a crowded room, or a conversation over coffee at two in the afternoon.

This is the story of **two souls who were never supposed to cross paths**—yet destiny had other plans. Their journey isn't just about the rush of falling in love, but the quiet battles, the sacrifices, and the choices that make love endure. It's about whispered promises, stubborn hope, and the courage to hold on even when the world says let go.

To you, the reader:

Thank you for picking up this book. May it meet you where you are—whether you're healing, hoping, or simply longing to get lost in a story that feels like a heartbeat.

Now, take a sip of your coffee, turn the page, and let's begin.

—The Author Who Finally Listened to the Dream

Dedications

*To My Father, Late Shri Raghuvir Prasad Jain,
Your unwavering support, inspiring me to dream,
teaching me the power of resilience.*

My first book is my small way of saying thank you.

*To My Mother, Smt Vishnu Kanta Jain, whose love
is my greatest inspiration—your kindness, love, and
endless belief in me made every word on these pages
possible. This is for you."*

*To My Best Friend, Sanjay Dutt Sharma, my
anchor in chaos and partner in laughter—thank you for
always listening, encouraging, and reminding me to keep
going. This story is ours, too."*

*To My Wife, Shipra Jain, my heart's keeper, your
love is my safe place and your faith in me, my greatest
motivation. Every page carries a piece of you."*

*To My Son, Amogh Jain, my brightest stars—may
these words remind you someday that dreams are worth
chasing, and love is the best story of all."*

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Chapter 1

Vijay

Vijay came back from the office early, as there was an announcement to leave the workplace as soon as possible. While returning home, many thoughts flooded Vijay's mind. When will this be over, and will life return to how it was before? He was thinking about his family's well-being, and somewhere in his mind, there was also concern about job security. If there is a salary deduction next month, how will he manage the household? And who will look after his wife and Abhay if something happens to him?

The roads were empty; only a few vehicles were on the road. It seemed that all the people had reached their homes or were on their way. Most of the shops were closed, and the remaining ones were in the process of closing. It was not a usual sight; there was a change, and it was visible.

By solving the puzzle in his mind, Vijay reached home. After parking his car, he moved to his flat. His

pace to reach the flat was slow, and in his confusion, he rang the bell. His wife opened the door, and upon seeing Vijay sad and tense, she asked him if he was all right.

“Yeah, all okay,” Vijay replied while entering the home.

He settled on the sofa and tried to relax. In the meantime, his wife came with a glass of water. She handed it to Vijay, and in one go, Vijay drank the full glass.

His wife also sat on the sofa, waited for a moment, then looked at Vijay and asked, “Are you now okay?” Vijay, this time with a calm gesture, replied, “Yes, all okay.”

“Then why are you looking worried? It seems that you are hiding something, as the tension is reflected on your face, and you seem to be worried,” his wife said. Vijay looked at his wife; his mind had gone back to memories.

It was eight years ago when he first saw her at a family function. At that time, he was unmarried and had come to a relative's wedding. He was not willing to attend the marriage, but her mother asked him to come. Vijay, during that week, was occupied with his project, and as the deadline approached, the pressure to complete it kept him away from social responsibilities.

Vijay, a software engineer. He completed his engineering from Pune University and was working in an MNC in Gurgaon. Although his company was in Gurgaon, he chose to live in Delhi because of his love for the city. Vijay's native place is Mathura, but he came to Delhi for IIT coaching. He liked Delhi because the city had offered him, or a person like him, everything. Delhi is a city of dreams, an education hub, and a city full of life.

After taking the exam, he was selected for Pune University, where he completed his B.Tech. He then applied for a job at NCR and was selected by one of the MNCs. He was happy to settle in Delhi.

Initially, it was a hectic and time-consuming schedule for him, but soon he adjusted. Life was challenging at the workplace since he was new, and this was his first job, so everything was unfamiliar. However, with his hard work and dedication, he performed well, and the results of his efforts were appreciated by his seniors.

One day, he received a call from his mother, who asked him to come to Mathura and attend a marriage. Initially, he resisted but finally bowed to his mother's wish and conveyed that he would come to Mathura for the wedding.

On 18th May 2014, he reached the railway station and caught the train to Mathura. No matter how much work pressure a person has, leaving to reach one's hometown always brings happiness that feels like being on cloud nine. Whenever a young person leaves their hometown to study or work, they not only leave their house but also memories, friends, family, and unforgettable moments behind. The body travels with that person, but the soul remains at home.

On the way home, Vijay was gazing intently at everything passing by. From the train window, he saw fields, people working in the fields, kids playing, and large signboards displaying different products and movie posters. Traveling by train in India is another life experience; it's not just a journey from one place to another but a voyage through diverse cultures and languages.

On the northern railway, you can enjoy South Indian food, and a South Indian passenger can relish North Indian beverages like lassi—all on the same train. Discussions can range from politics to cricket, corruption to law and order, education to environment, and the differences in thinking, perspectives, and lifestyles between the older and younger generations. All these topics can be discussed healthily while traveling. One can witness the vibrant colors of life in one place. Lost

in his thoughts and memories of the past, Vijay didn't realize that he had reached his destination.

The happiness of reaching his hometown reflected on Vijay's face. He took an auto rickshaw from the railway station and reached his home.

Upon arriving home, he learned that his house had become a gathering place for relatives who had also come for the wedding. His eyes searched for his mother, but he couldn't find her. His father saw him and called out his name.

Vijay turned around and saw that his father was smiling. He came closer, touched his father's feet, and received a warm hug. His father asked about his well-being. Soon after, his mother arrived from the market, happy to see her son at home. Vijay, who had been waiting for this moment, went to her and hugged her tightly. All the tiredness from the journey vanished in an instant.

There was a peaceful silence in the atmosphere; a mother's joy and love can never be greater than the happiness of seeing her children.

Vijay always found solace in the hug he received from his mother. She asked him about his well-being and said, "You have lost weight; are you not eating your meals on time?"

Vijay was sure about this question being asked, as he was expecting it from his mother. He just smiled and said, "No, mummy, I have not lost weight; rather, I have gained weight by eating outside food."

"Who said you have gained weight? You are never going to change," said his mother.

Vijay did not answer because he was aware that no matter how much he tried to convince her, she would not be convinced. So, it was better to leave this question. After some time, when he was resting, his cousin Ravi came to meet him. Ravi was one year older than Vijay. He was doing his business in Mathura, and he was like a friend to him.

"Vijay, be ready to attend the marriage; we are already getting late," Ravi said in one go.

"No, Ravi, I am not interested in going. I have just come and am not willing to go," Vijay replied.

"Vijay, I am not going without you; you have to come because Nitin and Sachin are also coming. It will be our get-together, and you know that all four of us are meeting after so much time. When they are available, then you are not here, and when you come, they are not available. So, this time we should not miss this chance to get together."

Ravi continued, "Vijay, I am happy that Nitin and Sachin are also here and coming to the marriage, but I

am not interested in attending the wedding. You guys can go, and tomorrow evening, we all can meet.” Vijay was trying to convince Ravi, but something else was decided by his destiny, and Ravi was just playing his role.

In life, there is something that is decided by our destiny, and everything happens in order so that the events that occur are as designed by destiny.

Vijay and Ravi reached the wedding destination. The venue was the Holiday Inn Hotel. Vijay liked the place, and his happiness doubled when he met his old friends Nitin and Sachin there.

For him, it was not just a relative's marriage function but his friends' reunion.

All four friends were having a good time at the function. They were talking about their college days, the fun they had, and their current office/business lives. All of them shared the same feeling, which made them nostalgic as they remembered the moments they had spent together.

“So, Vijay, tell us about your love life. Have you found your soulmate in Delhi or in your office, or are you still waiting for your dream girl?” Nitin asked Vijay.

For a moment, Vijay was silent, and then he broke his silence by saying, “Kamino, don’t you have any other

topic? Or do you just expect some Bollywood-type love story?

There is nothing like that. I don't believe in all this Bollywood nonsense. Do you guys really think that it is possible to have love at first sight, as shown in movies? Today's generation dreams about that same type of experience they saw in films. How can you love a person without knowing him well? Bollywood and some writers who write love stories have created a life out of reality. All they have created is an illusion. People, after watching movies and reading novels, hope that one day they will encounter this fantasy, and they will find their soulmate like Raj did in *DDLJ*.

Guys, I do not have a girlfriend, and I am not even sure that I will get one, as I am very busy with my work. I think I will either not marry or my parents will search for a bride for me. I am not interested in all this." Vijay gave a long speech, which was not appreciated by anyone.

"Bhai, we don't need a lecture on love or Bollywood. We were just asking about your relationship status, and you could have answered normally. If you are committed, then when are you getting married?" Nitin said while teasing Vijay.

Then all the friends laughed and went to have some snacks.

A person talking about the concept of love at first sight and saying he has no time or interest in all this was unaware that we are all born with some destiny. When it changes our lives, we never know. The upcoming and unknown events that happen in our lives are part of our destiny. When destiny decides something for us, we cannot change it. Everything happens in a flow, and when we witness this, we realize that the creator of this universe is bigger than our imagination.

"Excuse me," Vijay turned around and saw a girl. She was asking him to give her some space, as she wanted to go near her friends who were waiting for her at a distance. Vijay was stunned and gazing at her. He was not able to take his eyes off her. It looked like some force had frozen him; his mind was ordering him to step away, but his heart was not obeying the supreme power of his body—the mind. His heart was beating faster, and his entire body became a slave to his heart. The mind, which controls the body, was unable to figure out this mess. It seems that the heart has become supreme, and the body is obeying its order. The first eye refuses to obey the order of the mind, and then the other parts also join the heart's order and become partners to the eyes.

In life, we make most of our decisions with the use of our mind because it is considered the best tool for decision-making due to its power of thought and analysis. It can analyze the outcome of an action and

determine what will be beneficial and what will not. It also considers the outcome in two parts: short-term and long-term. Nowadays, it not only controls money matters but has also entered into relationships. Many times, we see that a person forms friendships and relationships to gain something. Gain can be in various forms: monetary, reputation, or power. The mind has transformed the whole world into a place where everything can be evaluated in terms of profit and loss.

When God created a person and gave him a mind, the Almighty thought that if He endowed a person with a mind, no doubt he would use it to make his life comfortable. Humans would invent new technologies to prevent natural calamities and find ways to organize and behave in such a way that all human beings could live together harmoniously. The major difference between humans and animals is that humans have a mind or brain, while animals lack the same. But at the same time, He thought that humans should also possess something else that could make their lives more livable and sustainable. So, He created the most loving thing — the “Heart.”

A heart is different from a mind. It functions in its own unique way. It does not care about or calculate profit and loss. Instead, it works in a manner that can change a person's view of the world. Today, if we see that the world is dominated by the mind, but also

supported by the heart, then a person can bring balance into his life.

Most emotions are related to the heart, such as love, kindness, empathy, gratitude, compassion, and feelings, all of which are governed by the heart.

Businesses and relationships both depend on trust, and trust is powered by the heart. Therefore, there is a balance in a person's life, with the mind and heart working together. The Almighty created both the mind and the heart simultaneously. The combination of the two is essential for leading a good, balanced life. A person worships God for His kindness, love, and compassion toward living creatures.

Excuse me! This time, the girl increased her pitch, and Vijay, who was just gazing at her, came out of his dreamy world.

“Oh, sorry,” he said, giving way to her. As she moved to the other side, her eyes met Vijay’s. For a fraction of a second, both eyes greeted each other and conveyed a message that neither of them understood. Vijay and the girl were unaware of what was happening, but their eyes became drawn to each other. Vijay’s heart was beating faster, and even after trying to calm himself and look composed, he was not able to do so. He wondered whether this was a hallucination or reality, and he was fortunate to realize that it was indeed real.

After this, Vijay was no longer the same person he used to be. His eyes searched for her face, and to find her, he was looking around here and there.

There was a good crowd at the function, but his eyes were determined to find their companion. Vijay became a victim of his eyes and heart. Now, all decisions were being made by his heart and his eyes. He was searching, and his search was completed when he saw her on the stage.

While Vijay was busy with all this, his friends came to him and asked, "Where were you?" He was about to tell a lie to his friends, but even his tongue was not cooperating. He was strumming, and his mind was unable to accept that his heart had overpowered him. His mind was trying to convince him that there was nothing like that and that no need to follow that girl, but the ball was in the court of his heart.

"What, Vijay? What are you saying? We are not able to understand. You are here, and we were looking for you all around. Come, we will sit somewhere, as the varmala is about to happen."

"We should also be witnesses to this auspicious moment for which we have come here; we have not come only for chatting and food," Ravi said with a laugh.

Vijay was not paying attention to what Ravi was saying; his whole concentration was on that girl. He

didn't say anything, but his friends understood that Vijay was hiding something.

After some time, Ravi noticed that Vijay was watching a girl who was a friend of the bride. He came closer to Vijay and said in his ear, "I can tell you who she is, but why do you want to know about her?" Vijay didn't say anything, but his facial expression showed that he wanted to know about that girl.

"Don't worry, wait for some time. I will let you know her name," Ravi said.

The varmala function was about to start. All the groom's friends and relatives, as well as the bride's friends and relatives, took their places on stage. There was a lovely atmosphere, with everyone cheering, having a good time, and witnessing the ceremony. Boys from the groom's side complimented the bride, and the girls from the bride's gang reciprocated.

Manav, the groom, was being held by his friends on their shoulders when the bride, Pooja, came near him with the varmala. There was so much noise and hooting on the stage. Ravi and Vijay were also on stage with Nitin and Sachin.

At that moment, Vijay's eyes met the eyes of that girl again. For a moment, it seemed as if time had stopped; there was no noise, no hooting. It was as if the Almighty was in favor of his heart. Maybe his heart had

prayed to the Almighty, and the Almighty had stopped time so that Vijay's heart and eyes could have their moment. For a second, both sets of eyes met, and in the presence of the Almighty, they made some unspoken commitment to each other.

It was not the girl's beauty that attracted Vijay; it was some magical force that drew him toward her. Perhaps destiny was playing its role. Destiny was guiding Vijay toward someone, and there was no room for failure.

Then a voice called out a name — "Nisha." Two people moved. First, Vijay looked to see who had called that name. The outcome was different, but ultimately more important. It was that girl, whose name Vijay wanted to know. She looked behind and responded with a "Yes."

Chapter 2

Nisha

What happened, Vijay? Will you tell me something? Why are you tense? Nisha asked.

Vijay came out of his memories and saw that Nisha was looking at him and asking the same question repeatedly. Vijay realized that he could not remain silent for much longer and that he would have to say something to Nisha.

"Oh, there is nothing to worry about, Nisha," Vijay replied. "As you know, there is a one-day lockdown tomorrow due to coronavirus. This has been implemented to control the deadly virus."

"Yes! I know, Vijay. It is all over television that the coronavirus has taken the lives of many people across the world, and it has also reached India. There have been cases in India, too. But don't worry, Vijay, everything will be fine."

Corona, a virus that originated in China, has spread across all nations, and the casualties are increasing day by day. The most horrifying aspect is that it spreads when it comes into contact with another person. The only way to prevent this is to keep a distance and wear a mask.

The next day, the whole nation was shut down. It was a complete lockdown. TV news channels showed images of all cities in lockdown. It felt like it was just for one day; maybe the coronavirus wouldn't last, but life would go on.

The next morning was different. No offices and no outside activities. Vijay, as usual, woke up on time and was ready for work at the usual time. He set up his laptop at home, and work started as it normally did at office hours. The only difference was that he was working from his home table instead of his office desk.

The day passed as usual, but in the evening, there was an announcement that the lockdown period had been extended for another 21 days. It was shocking to everyone—how could this be done, as it would disrupt the entire livelihood? There would be no offices, no schools, and no shops opening except those selling medical supplies and daily necessities. Public transport like trains and buses was suspended, allowing only private vehicles for delivering essential goods like medicines, food, vegetables, and milk. No restaurants,

hotels, parks, or cinemas—everything was closed for the next 21 days.

Vijay and Nisha were watching the news. Their 5-year-old son, Abhay, was unaware of what was going on and was completely ignorant of the coronavirus. When he asked in the evening to ride his cycle, he was told to stay at home. It was explained to him that, for safety reasons, everyone should avoid going outside, as a deadly virus was spreading. So, it's better to stay safe at home.

The 5-year-old boy didn't understand much, but that day, he did not make any further requests to go outside or ride his cycle.

Nowadays, it was getting hard, as no one was allowed to go outside, and the kids were becoming impatient because they wanted to play outside. All office workers were forced to work from home. For some people, working from home was a relief from daily hours of travel; they were able to save a lot of time. However, many others preferred working in the office.

Vijay was a disciplined person. He did not change his daily routine. He used to wake up at his usual office time. When he was unable to go for a walk in the park, he started doing yoga at home. At the scheduled office time, he was ready and opened his laptop promptly. His breakfast and lunch were on time, and he had gotten

used to having dinner early since he was at home. He thought it better to have dinner a little earlier. The only relaxation was in the evening when he went out for daily essentials. Usually, the market was closed, and there were very few vehicles on the road. A police jeep patrolled the streets, ensuring that people did not roam around freely.

Life was going on as usual. During this period, Vijay and Nisha understood that they had to help each other and that Abhay should not be affected by the lonely atmosphere. Both Vijay and Nisha worked together and made sure to give full attention to Abhay. They started playing games with him, and even Abhay loved the full attention of his parents.

It was necessary for them to keep company with Abhay, who couldn't go outside and was spending entire days at home. This was one of the most difficult tasks for him. A child who loved to spend time with kids his age was forced to stay indoors all the time. Watching TV or using the phone was not a good option for passing the whole day. Since Abhay was good at drawing, Vijay and Nisha made sure he used his time to draw. Abhay enjoyed this and created several artworks. Vijay only went outside to buy essential items and avoided going out unnecessarily.

In the initial days of the lockdown, if someone was found to be affected, they were asked to be shifted to the

hospital, and their family members were advised to go into quarantine for the next 8-10 days.

One night, Vijay started to have a fever. Nisha gave him medicine that was available at home. Vijay thought it was just a normal fever, but his condition worsened. He was experiencing difficulty breathing, and his ability to taste was also diminishing. Nisha became worried after seeing Vijay's condition, as he was not improving. She consulted a doctor via video call and obtained a prescription. After examining Vijay's symptoms, the doctor advised him to take a COVID-19 test, as his symptoms were similar to those of coronavirus.

The same day, a team of doctors visited their home and took samples from Vijay and Nisha. Since Nisha was caring for Vijay and in contact with him, her test was also taken to check if she had any symptoms of COVID-19.

Abhay, who was watching all this, asked his mother what had happened to Papa, why there was a team of doctors at home, and why he was not allowed to meet his father. Nisha, with a heavy heart, was unable to answer all his questions at once. However, summoning some courage, she told him that Papa was not feeling well, so Dr. Uncle had come to check him and give him medicine. She assured him that once Papa started feeling better, he could talk to him and even play together. Kids don't understand big words, but they

understand feelings. They recognize the hardships faced by their parents and, sometimes silently, try to prevent them, as they don't fully understand what's happening.

That night, Nisha sat near Vijay, who was resting with his eyes closed. As she watched him, a wave of nostalgia washed over her. Life had been good with Vijay. He always supported her, cared for her, loved her, and most importantly, understood her. There were times when Nisha needed Vijay's support, and he never disappointed her. He was always there when she needed him most. From their first meeting until now, they had faced many problems. Sometimes they disagreed, but with understanding and care, they resolved all their differences.

She remembered Vijay often saying that, like money, when we invest in a relationship—our time, care, and love—our bonds grow stronger. He believed that spending quality time with family and being available for them brought peace, support, and love into their lives. These moments of togetherness made life more meaningful.

The day Vijay came to know about Nisha's pregnancy, he was very happy. He was on cloud nine. From that moment until the delivery, he gave his full attention to her. His wish was to have a baby girl, and he used to tell Nisha that they would have a baby girl. Nisha was joyous, but at the same time, she had a lot of

tantrums. However, Vijay, with a full heart, did everything to make her happy.

On the day of the delivery, Nisha gave birth to a baby boy. Vijay was the first person in the family to see his son. A wave of love swept over him. He became so emotional after seeing a new life in his hands that he was unable to speak a single word. He looked at Nisha with love and went near the bed where she was resting. He let her see the face of the baby and said, "Our love is in my hand." A smile appeared on Nisha's face, which was the most precious thing for Vijay. A sense of fulfillment and joy reflected on his face.

There is a saying that time never comes back, but for Vijay and Nisha, it was different. They lived their childhood again with Abhay; they watched cartoon shows, played with toys, loved the taste of orange candies, and played hide and seek. They enjoyed their new way of childhood. They relived their childhood in a new form. They captured these moments on camera — when Abhay started crawling, crying, dancing, seeing something new, wondering, and engaging in any activity that made them laugh.

Many thoughts ran through her mind, and the moments they shared with Abhay brought a smile to her face. The memories of Abhay's early childhood—crawling, crying, dancing, discovering new things—were unforgettable.

Vijay was lying quietly, and Nisha came out of her thoughts, recalling memories. She gently told him, “Don’t worry, Vijay. I am always here to support you. You will get well soon.” Vijay, lying there, listened to her words. He tried to say something, but the effects of the medicine were strong, and his responses were slow. Nisha asked him to rest and then went to sleep.

That night, sleep was elusive. She tried to rest but couldn’t succeed. Her mind kept replaying Vijay’s health and the constant flashing news about the pandemic. She tried to stay positive because it was the only way to cope. She remained awake late into the night, thinking about Vijay and trying to divert her mind with other thoughts. Eventually, she fell asleep without realizing it.

The next morning, the first thing on her mind was Vijay. She went to the room where he was sleeping. Finding him resting peacefully, she decided not to wake him, knowing the medicine had affected his sleep. The day passed normally. Both Nisha and Vijay conversed casually, and Nisha made sure not to show how worried she was. It was painful to see Vijay in pain.

Vijay inquired about her and Abhay. Nisha reassured him, saying, “All is well. Don’t worry, just relax. You’ll be fine. It might just be a normal fever, and the report expected tomorrow will likely be negative.” Hearing this, Vijay’s face showed relief. He remained

optimistic about the test result. They spent the day talking about their life experiences, their moments with Abhay, unfinished plans, past trips, and upcoming travel. They tried to keep the atmosphere at home positive. They also called their parents, which made both of them feel more relaxed and calm.

In the afternoon, Nisha received a call. After talking for a few minutes, her face suddenly turned tense and emotional, as if she was about to cry.

The call was from the hospital, informing her that Vijay tested positive for COVID-19. The caller advised her to avoid going near him, mentioned that they were coming to her home, and stated that Vijay would be admitted to the hospital. In the early days of the pandemic, anyone testing positive was hospitalized, and their family members were asked to quarantine for the next 8-10 days.

Nisha started to cry, and when Abhay came to her asking, "Why are you crying, mumma?" Nisha was speechless. She just hugged him tightly. Her legs trembled, and she was unable to find a way to convey this to Vijay. She became more worried about Vijay after seeing the news on TV regarding the fatality rate of the coronavirus. Her mind went blank; she slowly walked toward Vijay's room but then turned back and went to the kitchen instead. It was Vijay who had decided to shift to another room once he developed a

fever, to avoid spreading any infection to Nisha and Abhay.

Nisha was even more worried about being away from Vijay in this situation. She didn't want to leave him alone for a single moment. Vijay was her life, and at this difficult time, she wanted to be with him. She was thinking about stopping the doctor from taking him to the hospital, wanting to care for him herself at home. But when she looked at the situation from another perspective, she realized that Vijay's condition had not improved in the last few days, and the necessary medical facilities might not be available at home.

But who would look after him in the hospital? Hospitals were becoming overcrowded day by day, and being admitted in this situation was a gamble—either a win or a loss.

Summoning her courage, she entered Vijay's room. Vijay was asleep and looking uneasy. When he saw Nisha, he tried to get up, but Nisha asked him to lie down.

Nisha looked at Vijay and Vijay looked at her. He immediately sensed something was wrong. Her face was tense, and she seemed so disturbed that she couldn't express what was bothering her. Vijay was in pain, but he couldn't bear to see Nisha in this state. He tried to cheer himself up and then asked her what had happened

and why she was so nervous. He understood that she might be worried about his health, but he also knew that tension wouldn't help. His voice was slow, but Nisha understood what he wanted to know. Despite her urge to answer, she asked him to rest.

Vijay repeated his question, and after waiting patiently, Nisha finally broke down in front of him and started crying. She didn't want to do this, but her heart surrendered, and tears streamed down her face.

Her eyes were more determined than ever. They seemed to promise herself that she wouldn't let tears fall, but they were insistent—they wanted to come out and see the world. Her eyes warned her that there was nothing truly precious in this world, and it might be better for tears to stay inside her.

As tears flowed freely, they felt like they were celebrating their victory, flowing uncontrollably and forcing Nisha's palms to rise in an attempt to stop them. But as soon as they emerged, she realized she had made a mistake. It was not the right time for tears. She saw Vijay's face—painful and grief-stricken upon seeing her crying.

It was already late, and Vijay saw her tears. The last time he saw tears in her eyes was when she first looked at Abhay after he was born. Those tears had

symbolized happiness, joy, and love. But now, the situation was different.

Vijay waited for a moment and then asked, “Nisha, what happened? Why are you crying? I know you’re worried about me, but don’t worry—everything will be fine.”

“No... everything is not fine, Vijay,” Nisha finally admitted, her voice trembling. “I received a call a few hours ago from the hospital. Your COVID-19 test came back positive, and they are coming to take you to the hospital,” she said, sobbing. It was very hard for her to share this news, but she had no choice, as the medical team was coming to take Vijay away.

Vijay was stunned for a moment but soon regained his composure. He knew he had to be strong now, to give Nisha some encouragement to handle the situation. Despite feeling unwell, he didn’t show his emotions on his face or in his voice.

Looking at Nisha with determination, Vijay said, “Even if the report is positive, why are you so worried? If I were in the hospital, I’d recover soon. And it wouldn’t affect you here because the virus spreads through contact with an infected person.”

“I know, Vijay, but I can’t help feeling that way. My heart doesn’t want to let you go to the hospital. It

feels like I'm losing you when I send you there. I'm so skeptical about it—I don't know what to do."

"Nisha, I understand your feelings, but this situation is different. We don't have the luxury to choose or prefer. We have to act according to the current circumstances, and right now, that means I need to be in the hospital. It's for our best. You have to be strong and take care of Abhay. You've faced tough situations before, and I'm sure you'll handle this too. Our destiny brought us together, and only destiny can separate us. I believe we will all be together again."

There was a long silence. Neither of them spoke. The atmosphere was calm, but tense. Nisha looked at Vijay's face, which showed no signs of tension—only a fighting spirit, ready to face any challenge.

In the evening, a team from the hospital arrived at Vijay's home. Vijay got out of bed and prepared to go to the hospital. A doctor from the team spoke with Nisha and checked Vijay's condition. All team members wore masks and protective suits.

Nisha and Abhay watched as Vijay entered the ambulance. Abhay asked her where Papa was going, and Nisha explained that Papa was going to the hospital for treatment and would come back soon. She wanted to hug Vijay, but was asked to maintain distance for safety. Both their eyes were heavy—they felt the pain of

separation, especially since it was the first time in their lives they were apart for such a long time. As Vijay entered the ambulance, he saw Nisha and Abhay with heavy hearts. The residents of their colony watched from balconies and windows, terrified to see the ambulance. Some were sad for Vijay, while others warned their families to avoid contact for the time being, out of fear of the virus.

Nisha watched the ambulance leave with a heavy heart. Vijay gave her a farewell wave and asked her to take care. Within minutes, the ambulance disappeared from her view. Nisha and Abhay remained standing in the same spot—her legs trembling, unwilling to go home without Vijay.

Malti, a neighbor in her fifties, came outside to comfort her.

“Don’t worry, beta. Everything will be fine. Vijay will recover and come back soon. Don’t stress yourself. If you need any help, please let me know. I’ll be happy to assist you. I know it’s easy to say everything will be fine, but only someone going through this situation can truly understand the pain. That’s life—we all have struggles. We have to stay strong. I believe you have the right attitude to handle this,” she said kindly.

A sense of relief touched Nisha's heart. A person's character is reflected in their positive attitude and kindness. Malti Aunty was a true embodiment of that.

Fifteen minutes passed, but Nisha remained standing in the same spot. Malti Aunty was there for moral support, and soon, three or four more neighbors came out, all wearing masks and practicing social distancing. They offered their help and told Nisha she could ask for anything she needed.

Nisha nodded. Abhay, just five years old, was surprisingly mature. Knowing his father was going to stay in the hospital for a few days, he didn't cry. Instead, he stood quietly beside his mother, showing remarkable composure.

Chapter 3

Tillu

Tillu, a gangster from Old Delhi, was notorious for his crimes, including kidnapping, murder, extortion, and money laundering. These crimes were synonymous with his name. Although he was charged in some cases, he still remained out of police reach. He was on the run but continued to operate his gang from different locations.

Born into a middle-class family, Tillu was an average student. He was not interested in studying hard and was mostly involved in fights with other students. His strong physique and fighting attitude made him famous on the school premises. Despite being punished severely by teachers, his behavior did not change. His family also tried to advise him to focus on his studies and stay away from unacceptable behavior. They emphasized the importance of education and the impact of his actions on his future.

But Tillu was in another world; to him, the most important thing was power. He was determined to get

whatever he wanted by hook or by crook. Despite their best efforts, his parents could not change his attitude. He barely passed his 12th exams and was ready to join college for graduation. He was not interested in studying but was eager to experience college life, which he had seen in movies and heard about from seniors.

After joining college, he was on cloud nine. The atmosphere was different—no dress codes, no strict discipline like school. It seemed as if he had wings to fly here.

Soon, with his nature, he made friends who were also like him. He was ready to do anything, even sacrifice his life for his friends. Once, one of his friends got into a fight with a senior student and returned with bloodstained clothes. This made Tillu very angry. He was eager to take revenge and came out of his room with a hockey stick. His other friends advised him to wait for the right moment, warning him of the danger involved since the seniors were also present in the group. But Tillu was adamant and refused to listen.

He went alone to a field where seniors were playing basketball. Knowing exactly who had hit his friend, he directly approached the basketball court and struck the person with his hockey stick on the head. The person fell, bleeding from the head and crying in pain. Tillu stood there with his hockey, feeling a sense of relief and

victory. No one dared to come near him, and he felt like he had won an important match.

When his friends saw what he had done, they lifted him onto their shoulders. Pinku, the friend for whom Tillu had fought, was crying tears of joy—Tillu was his hero. Pinku hugged him and said, "My life will always owe you." From his heart, he accepted Tillu as his mentor and guide.

The news of this assault spread rapidly across the college, and everyone knew about him. He was called to meet the college management. When he arrived, he was asked why he had acted that way, especially since the person he hit was present.

Tillu was asked to accept his mistake and write an apology letter. But he showed no remorse; he believed what he did was right. The outcome was his suspension from college for one month. Tillu left the office smiling. That evening, he was celebrating with friends. Pinku decided that until Tillu returned, he would also stay away from college.

"Bhai, don't worry. I'm not coming to college until you do. We'll enjoy outside," Pinku said.

Tillu smiled and replied, "I don't know what more will happen for you, but I'm not worried. Your brother is always with you."

They spent the night in a friend's room. The rest of their friends had left for home or college hostels. Tillu was reluctant to go home because of the tense atmosphere there. His father was very angry and asked him to apologize to Vikram and promise it would never happen again. Tillu refused to apologize, which made his father angry. His mother also tried to make him understand, but he would not listen.

This incident marked a new turning point in Tillu's life. He became more fearless and more involved in college politics than studies. He was confident about returning after his suspension and was welcomed back with enthusiasm. His friends even gave him a nickname—"Yaaron ka Yaar" (Friend of Friends). No one dared to fight with him now. His circle of friends grew, and new students joined their group.

One day, as he was riding his bike to college, he was chased by another bike. Midway, someone on a bike tried to attack him with a hockey stick, but Tillu narrowly escaped. Once he reached college, news of the attack spread. His friends and known students gathered around him, led by Pinku, who was furious and ready to seek revenge.

"We will not leave the person who dared to attack Bhai Tillu," Pinku declared. "Our Bhai has always supported us and fought for us. Now it's our turn. This

attack isn't just on Tillu; it's on our unity and friendship. We won't tolerate it."

The crowd echoed, "Bhai ka dushman hamara dushman" (his enemy is our enemy). They swore to take revenge. Pinku asked some of his friends to find out who was responsible. The first suspect was the same person Tillu had hit with his hockey stick.

But it was later revealed that the attack was carried out by someone else, whose identity and motive remained unknown. Tillu, feeling threatened, often got involved in fights whenever he perceived danger to his friends. His gang was now more involved in college politics and violence than studies.

Tillu, young, fearless, sharp, and a natural leader, inspired many who weren't interested in academics but in other pursuits. He became the epitome of fearlessness, and no one dared to challenge him in college.

Over time, Tillu's aggression increased. His father's dreams of a good education and a stable future seemed shattered. His father's efforts to guide him were futile; Tillu was in a different world. He believed that these actions brought him temporary happiness. His reputation as a gang leader and his charisma were fleeting—he would eventually leave college, and his position would be replaced by someone else. The true assets of his life would be his knowledge, skills, vision,

and attitude toward his career and life. But he was trapped in the illusion of this fake life.

One morning, as he was preparing for college, his father called him and asked to talk.

“Tillu, what are you doing? Have you decided about your future? What’s your goal in life?”

Tillu listened but didn’t pay attention. After repeated questions from his father, he finally responded.

“Papa, I’m going to college now, but I haven’t thought about my future or goals yet. I’ll decide later.”

“Why are you in such a hurry? If you’re not interested in studies, what’s the point of going to college? Meeting friends who have no purpose in life, wandering around—you’re wasting your time and your life,” his father said.

“Papa, why the rush to decide your future? My friends are like my life. We have goals bigger than life, but right now, we just want to live our way. I have respect for my friends and the entire college. I will write my own destiny. I will decide what I want and how I want to live—maybe even how I will die,” Tillu replied confidently.

“Beta, you’re not confident; you’re overconfident. Life isn’t as easy as you think. Time is precious—it

never comes back. If you're not serious about your life and career, you won't succeed," his father warned.

"Papa, you're overthinking. I don't want a nine-to-six job like yours. I am the master of my destiny. I will do something big and enjoy all the comforts and luxuries I want," Tillu said, then left for college.

His father stood there, worried. He felt his son was on the wrong path. His attitude and choices could ruin his future. It was painful for him to see his son wasting his life.

Tillu's daring made him popular among students, but it also made enemies. Many he had assaulted wanted revenge. Once, he narrowly escaped an attack, but life is the outcome of actions—what you do eventually comes back.

One winter morning, while running in a field with his friend Ritesh, two masked men on a bike opened fire on Tillu. Miraculously, he escaped, but Ritesh was hit. The bullet struck Ritesh in the stomach, and he collapsed immediately. Tillu, momentarily unconscious, soon regained consciousness, hurriedly holding Ritesh.

Ritesh was bleeding heavily. The attackers tried to shoot again at Tillu but missed and fled. Tillu, furious and heartbroken, cried for help. People came and took Ritesh to the hospital. News of the attack spread quickly.

His friends gathered at the hospital, along with Ritesh's parents, who were devastated.

Ritesh was a bright student, aspiring to be a journalist. He wanted to cover the upcoming college election and had often met Tillu for his views. Ironically, he became a victim of Tillu's violent world.

As doctors removed the bullet, they realized the damage was severe. Despite their efforts, Ritesh's life could not be saved. His parents, outside the operating theater, were shattered. Tillu, watching from a distance, silently prayed for Ritesh's recovery.

When the doctor finally emerged, he delivered heartbreaking news: Ritesh had not survived. His mother fainted, collapsing on the floor. Tillu quickly helped her to a bench.

"Our son's death is your fault," Ritesh's father said bitterly, approaching Tillu. "You've taken our son's life. We loved him, and now he's gone."

Tillu's father also arrived, slapping him hard. The sound echoed, and everyone fell silent.

"You've taken a life today. I told you before—your path leads nowhere. Today, we see the consequences of your choices. Someone innocent has paid the price," he said, anger and sorrow in his voice. He felt guilty himself, despite his efforts to guide Tillu. Tillu, who had

never understood his parents' love, only wanted to live his own way.

Silence fell. Tillu's father trembled, and Tillu stood quietly. His friends remained silent too. Inside, he felt a volcano of anger, struggling to stay calm.

He returned home without a word. The next day, he skipped Ritesh's funeral. For a week, he locked himself in his room. His parents, worried, thought he was overwhelmed by grief and guilt.

After a week, Tillu emerged, changed. He stopped going to college but would go outside briefly and return early. His parents felt hopeful—perhaps he was beginning to understand the value of life and responsibility.

But then, shocking news came—news that stunned his parents.

Two bodies were found in the same park where Ritesh was shot. Both had been killed in the same manner, and their identities matched those of the men who had killed Ritesh. It was revealed that Tillu had taken revenge—he had killed both men, who had been hired to kill him but mistakenly targeted Ritesh. Tillu had now become a fugitive.

Pinku, aware of Tillu's plans, wanted to join him in revenge, but Tillu insisted only he would handle it. Pinku, loyal as ever, ran away with him.

Their college friend believed justice had been served. Tillu had avenged Ritesh's death, and among his friends, there was admiration. But at home, his father was shattered; he had never imagined Tillu would take such a step.

His father never imagined that Tillu would take such a step. He was involved in a college fight, but killing someone never occurred to him. Now he was able to understand Tillu's silence; many thoughts and feelings of revenge were running through Tillu's heart and mind. He did not let his emotions show on his face, and he was preparing a plan to execute both people who had killed Ritesh. Tillu considered Ritesh's murder his personal loss and wanted to recover from it.

Now everything had changed. Tillu was on the run, and the police were making rounds at his home. They asked his parents where Tillu was, whether they knew about his plans for revenge, and if they had any information about his whereabouts.

There was no answer from Tillu's parents. They simply listened to the police questioning them. Every parent's dream is that their children will do good things and make them proud. But this happiness was absent from Tillu's parents' lives.

Despite having done nothing wrong, Tillu's parents felt guilty. It was a tough moment for them; their

neighbors and relatives were hesitant to speak against Tillu's previous actions and tried to avoid them as much as possible.

Several days passed without any news of Tillu. The police searched, but their efforts yielded no results. After some time, there was news that Tillu and Pinku had joined Bittu Bhai's gang. Bittu was a notorious gangster, with numerous cases of kidnapping, looting, extortion, murder, and money laundering registered against him. He was involved in all these crimes, but how Tillu came to meet him and decided to join the gang was unknown to anyone.

Tillu became more fearless and involved himself in more crimes. Pinku was always with him in every crime he committed.

A month passed, and the police still could not catch Tillu. Initially, it was not very difficult for the police to track him down, but after joining Bittu Bhai's gang, their grip loosened. The police were in plain clothes in the area near Tillu's home, hoping to catch him when he visited. They monitored everyone coming to Tillu's house, but no success came because Tillu had not visited his home in the past month.

One night, around 2 a.m., there was a knock on the roof door. Tillu's father, who was trying to sleep, was startled by the sound. For a moment, he thought it might

be his illusion, but then the knocking repeated, and he became sure someone was on the roof. He got up, approached the stairs, and asked through the nearby door, "Who is there?" The voice was familiar—Tillu's. A mix of happiness and anger gripped him simultaneously. There was fear in his voice.

He opened the door and saw Tillu standing before him. He did not hug Tillu but stood motionless, though deep down he had missed his son immensely and had waited for this moment. Now, however, his attitude was different. He asked, "Why have you come here?" his voice heavy and trembling.

"Can I come inside my home?" Tillu asked for permission before entering.

Tillu sat on the sofa. His father and mother were also there. The room was filled with silence; no one wanted to start the conversation. Tillu's parents were happy to see him but also afraid that he might stay only for a short while.

"Why don't you surrender?" Tillu's father broke the silence, asking him.

"No, I will not surrender," Tillu replied.

"If you don't want to surrender and don't feel guilty, then why have you come here?" his father asked, his tone heavy, with a mix of harshness and a plea.

“Papa, the first thing I want to clarify is that I don’t consider myself to have committed any crime. I have only done justice—justice for Ritesh. I don’t feel guilty, and I have come home to meet you and Mother. If you don’t want to meet me like this or are concerned about your reputation, then I will not come here again,” Tillu said.

"Justice? You have killed two people yourself and call it justice? It is the job of the police and courts to deliver justice to Ritesh. You were not authorized to take the law into your own hands. Have you ever realized what condition you’ve brought us to? Look at yourself—you’ve come home like a thief. You have ruined your life. See your condition—you can’t even meet your parents normally. We love and care for you, and that’s why we’re still trying to save you. Please understand and surrender. We will do our best to protect you legally. Just surrender."

“Papa, when the system becomes incompetent, someone has to take responsibility. I have chosen my path, and I will continue on it. I will never surrender. I understand your pain, but destiny has chosen this for me, and I will honor my destiny,” Tillu said confidently.

“Beta, for our sake, please surrender, and we will do our best to get you released as soon as possible,” his mother pleaded.

“Mummy, I can’t come now. I didn’t choose this profession, but this profession chose me. I know it’s tough for you and Papa, but I cannot surrender or live my life behind bars. I will live my life this way—I have power and money, and when a person has both, he rules,” Tillu said confidently, without regret.

“Beta, the life you have chosen is just an illusion. When you come out of this illusion, there will be no way back. You will get caught and end up behind bars—or maybe dead in a police encounter. That’s the likely outcome,” his mother warned. “Beta, don’t think you’re above the law or God. For your wrongdoing, you will have to suffer,” his father added, trying to persuade him.

“Papa, what are you talking about? The police fear us—they can’t catch us. I am the creator of my own destiny. I can even choose my death in my own way. No one can stop me,” Tillu replied with full determination.

“Beta, don’t speak like that. You never know what destiny has in store for you. What you’re saying—that you will decide your death your way—is arrogant. Are you bigger than God? Maybe your destiny is that when you die, no one will know, and it will happen unexpectedly. Please give this up and come out of it,” his father urged, still hopeful.

“Papa, I have come home to see you, but now I am leaving. Sorry to say, I am not coming back to your

civilized society. I have created my own world, and I am happy there. I won't ask you to leave your world and join mine, but don't expect me to come back," Tillu said, getting up to leave.

His parents stood silently, and there was little more to say. As Tillu moved toward the gate, his father stopped him. He approached, looked into Tillu's eyes, and held onto hope.

"Beta, if you've decided not to leave your criminal world, then one thing I want to tell you: don't come here again to meet us. We want to see our son, not a criminal. You are always welcome if you give up crime and live as a civilized person. But if you think we will accept you as a criminal, we are sorry. Now, you can go," his father said, turning away with tears in his eyes. It was a difficult stance, but he took it to try to get his son back.

His mother watched Tillu, wanting to stop him but unable to do so, torn between her husband's dignity and her love for her son. She chose her husband's dignity.

Tillu said nothing, and the sound of the door closing was heard by his parents. Both parties chose what they believed was right. Life was no longer the same for either of them. Tillu was adamant about not giving up his criminal life, while his parents were willing to sacrifice their love to bring him back. The battle between good and evil had begun, and neither was

willing to accept defeat. Evil believed its path was stronger, while good believed they would ultimately emerge victorious.

Life is unpredictable, and Tillu was proving it. That night, his parents couldn't sleep. They couldn't understand how their own son was disobeying them. They recalled childhood memories of Tillu—the day he was born, their happiness, and how his father took a week off to celebrate parenthood. They believed they raised him with love and care, teaching him discipline, the value of money, love, and family. Despite their efforts, Tillu had chosen a path they never imagined.

Tillu had covered his face and was returning to his car. Pinku was waiting for him. Seeing him approach, Pinku opened the door, and Tillu got in. He remained silent. Pinku asked about his parents, but Tillu did not reply. Pinku waited, then broke the silence.

“Pinku, what will be our destiny? Will we rule, or will we be finished in unexpected circumstances? Will anyone remember us after we're gone, or will our names vanish?” Tillu asked.

“What happened, Bhai? Why are you talking like this?” Pinku asked, knowing he didn't have an answer.

“Pinku, everyone has the right to choose their way of life, but society has rules and boundaries. When someone breaks the rules, they are punished. But if

someone takes revenge for being wronged, the system is quick to act against them. I am that second person. When Ritesh was killed and the system couldn't catch the culprit, I took justice into my own hands. The system criticizes us for that, but they forget that when the system is slow and justice delayed, someone has to step forward. If I punish the criminal myself, am I a criminal or a hero?" Tillu asked.

Pinku, listening, was speechless. He admired Tillu; he knew his methods might be wrong, but his intention was always right. Tillu became a criminal only to deliver justice to Ritesh. He understood that revenge meant they couldn't go back, and their chosen path was dangerous, but they couldn't leave it.

It wasn't their choice to enter the crime world, but to survive and avoid jail, they had joined it.

Pinku started the car, and they drove away without talking. Pinku knew how hard it was to leave their parents behind, as he had done the same.

Afterward, Tillu stopped visiting his parents' home. He didn't want to hurt them, but he refused to abandon his chosen path. As time passed, with Pinku and other gang members, Tillu became someone he didn't want to be—engaged in kidnapping, extortion, murder, and money laundering. Many cases were

registered against him. The police tried their best, but Tillu remained at large.

Tillu, now a wanted criminal, became more fearless. He even killed two police officers who came to arrest him. A lookout notice was issued, and a reward was announced for information. Police planned to confront him directly—an encounter that could end in his death.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a 21-day lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Tillu dismissed the news as nonsense. He refused to stay home, insisting he would continue his business. Pinku was worried about the rising cases, but Tillu ignored the warnings.

Eventually, his neglect proved disastrous. Tillu fell ill with symptoms similar to COVID-19. Pinku decided he needed a test, fearing that Tillu's condition could lead to his arrest or worse. Pinku arranged for a doctor to conduct the test secretly, without Tillu's ID, risking the doctor's own safety.

In the following days, Tillu's condition worsened. The test confirmed he was COVID-19 positive.

Chapter 4

Love at first sight

Vijay was lying in bed. The hospital was full of coronavirus-positive patients. The situation at the hospital was not as good as he expected. The fatality rate from coronavirus was increasing day by day. No one was allowed to meet the coronavirus patients. Doctors and supporting staff were doing their best to handle the cases. Aloneness, fear of life, and the surrounding atmosphere made the situation more critical.

Vijay was hopeful that everything would be fine. He was missing his family so much. All the time, he was thinking about Nisha, Abhay, and his parents. It seemed as though his mother was telling him to stay positive, and this gave him the strength to fight. As the phone was allowed, he was able to talk to them. Each time he talked to Nisha, it gave him a sense of hope, and he never reflected any sign of fear, anxiety, or tension on his face while doing video calls with Nisha and Abhay. At the same time, Nisha showed feelings of positivity and hope

while talking to Vijay. The most courageous inspiration to fight the disease came from seeing Abhay. His cuteness and innocence gave Vijay the power to fight and not give up.

After talking with Nisha and Abhay, Vijay was feeling better. To keep himself motivated and hopeful, Vijay was remembering his family and the Almighty God. It was the Almighty who made it possible for him to marry Nisha. Marrying Nisha was no less than a dream-come-true moment for Vijay. He never forgot how he met Nisha and fell in love at first sight. The phrase "love at first sight" became true for him.

Vijay recalled the moment when he first saw Nisha...

The girl turned around and said "Yes." Vijay came to know that the girl's name was Nisha. A feeling of euphoria swept over him. He was watching Nisha, and he felt that time was precious—something difficult to explain in words. From the core of his heart, he quietly murmured her name, a sound that was barely hearable to anyone. To his surprise, at the same time, Nisha, who was on stage with the bride during a photo session, turned her head. It seemed to her that someone had called her name, but after finding no one had called her, she resumed the photo session. However, a sense of bewilderment was reflected on her face. Vijay was watching all this, and for him, it was an indication that

a new chapter was about to be added to his life. He was happy but unsure how to share his new feelings with his friends. He wanted to keep this emotion to himself for the time being. The feelings he had at that moment prevented him from moving from where he was standing. He didn't want to miss a single moment. All his attention was on Nisha—he was noticing the way she was talking to her friends, her smile, and most importantly, her beautiful eyes.

There was a long wait, but Nisha's eyes caught his while he was watching her. It seemed that the wait was over, and when Nisha saw Vijay, there was some affection in her eyes. Both of them looked at each other for a moment, and a wave of love swept over him.

According to Vijay's intuition, this was the beginning of their love, but it was too early to predict. Vijay was not missing any moment, and Nisha noticed the same. For Nisha, it was just a normal occurrence among a group of young girls and boys. She noticed Vijay out of curiosity, as he was watching her intently. Vijay was sure that this was not infatuation—it was love at first sight. Nisha was unaware that her life was about to change. She was about to meet a person who was willing to do anything for her. The destiny of Vijay and Nisha was playing its role. Vijay, who was initially reluctant to attend this marriage, and Nisha, who was going abroad for further studies, both came to attend the

wedding. Vijay was brought by his mother, and Nisha postponed her travel plans for a few days to join her friend's wedding.

Vijay, who had come to this wedding with his friends, did not realize where they were. He was so absorbed in himself that he didn't notice or realize that he was alone and his friends were not with him. For a moment, he thought of searching for them, but then he excused himself, hoping to be near Nisha.

The Varmala function was over, and the bride and groom were relaxing for some time. Now, dinner arrangements were made for the bride and groom—the bride with her friends, as per the arrangement—and at the same time, the groom sat with his family and friends. Both parties settled down, and Vijay, along with Nitin, also sat there as the groom invited them to join. For Vijay, it was no less than a dream—he was sitting in front of Nisha. His heart was beating faster, and at the same time, he thanked the Almighty for providing this beautiful moment.

Vijay was eager to know more about Nisha, and his mind was searching for a way to start a conversation. As dinner progressed and conversations took place between the groom's side and the bride's side, Vijay was especially interested in Nisha. So, he took the initiative and asked her.

“Bhabhi, will you now introduce your friends?” Vijay asked her directly, while getting support from the groom's side.

“Hmm, I will introduce my friends. But let me know if you want a special introduction,” the bride teased Vijay.

Vijay didn't say anything. At the same time, he glanced at Nisha, and to his surprise, Nisha noticed his act. Without saying a word, Vijay let her know that she was someone special to him. Even though they hadn't spoken to each other before, Vijay considered Nisha someone very special.

From Nisha's side, her feelings were also beginning to change. What started as mere gazing and normal sensing was turning into something deeper.

“Your friends are special, so you need to introduce them all,” the groom said, supporting Vijay.

The bride was introducing her friends, and when she introduced Nisha, she hugged her.

“She is my best friend, Miss Nisha. We've been together since childhood, and she became my first—and I would say—best friend in school. Since that day, we've been inseparable. Do you know she postponed her trip to the US for her Master's Degree just for my wedding? I am so fortunate to have a friend like Nisha, who has always been there for me during my happy and difficult

times. She not only understood me but also helped me realize my potential. You never know—one day, she might become a famous fashion designer. The only thing worrying me is that she's going to the US for her master's, and she may settle there. We might not meet as often as we do now."

The bride's voice wavered with emotion at the end. The thought of Nisha leaving made her emotional.

Nisha, with tears in her eyes, hugged the bride. Both were emotional, aware that separation was painful, but also understanding that it was part of life. To pursue dreams and live fully, sometimes we have to part from family and friends.

"You've shared enough about me," Nisha said, smiling at the bride. "I am fortunate to have a friend like you who always supported me. I know going abroad will be tough, but I promise I will stay in touch."

After this, Nisha held Deepti's hand.

The atmosphere shifted from joyful to emotional. A big round of applause for the friendship of Nisha and Deepti. Vivek, the groom, clapped, and others joined in. Then Deepti introduced her other friends.

Vijay was happy to learn about Nisha, but her upcoming trip to the US saddened him. He wanted to spend the rest of his life with her, but circumstances had changed.

Now, it was Vivek's turn to introduce his friends. He began with Vijay:

"Hi, everyone. He is my cousin and my friend. He is an engineer working in Gurgaon. Initially, he was unable to attend the wedding due to work commitments, but he managed to come. He is very down-to-earth and helpful. But one interesting thing about Vijay is that he doesn't believe in love—or I should say—love at first sight. When I fell in love with Deepti during college, it was love at first sight for me. Vijay never felt this way in college, and often asked me how one could fall in love without knowing each other. He didn't understand this feeling and was skeptical about it, but he helped me unite with Deepti. Thanks, Vijay, for helping bring our families together and convincing them of our marriage. You made this possible."

Vivek then added, "I, Vivek, the groom, today declare that you will also fall in love and help others as you've helped me."

Vijay greeted Nisha at the table. It was a formal gesture, but for Vijay, it was like winning a prize. He thought that Vivek's words were true. Everything seemed to be aligned by the Almighty, and everything was happening as it should. Still, the thought that Nisha was leaving made him sad. But he decided not to dwell on it. She was fulfilling her dreams, and he was just a part of her life. If his intuition about loving Nisha was

correct, he planned to confess his feelings someday—though he wasn't sure when.

“Vivek always speaks like that; it was his effort and sincerity that made his wishes come true. Today, I realize that love at first sight is not only extraordinary but also a blessing from God.” Vijay, in expressing his gratitude for Vivek's appreciation, subtly indicated to Nisha that he had fallen in love with her.

Nisha understood Vijay's words and intuition but didn't want to rush her feelings. She wanted to be sure before giving her consent. While affection touched her soul, she also felt a sense of loneliness. She was about to go to the US for a two-year program next week, which was a long time. She wondered if Vijay, understanding the challenges of a long-distance relationship, might drift away. Commitment was important to her—she wanted to be committed and also needed assurance from him. Her studies and her family's sacrifices were her top priorities, and her career was more important than anything else.

The dinner ended, and the bride and groom engaged in some conversation. The friends and family also discussed, and the music stopped. Most guests had left, leaving only family members and close friends. Vijay's family was preparing to leave, but Vijay said he would stay a little longer. He didn't want to leave

immediately and decided to stay until the function ended early morning.

To pass the time and have some fun, the kids and friends decided to play antakshari. Once announced, everyone got ready, and the atmosphere shifted from dull to cheerful.

The groups were divided by gender—boys on one side, girls on the other—and the game began. Both groups sang songs, and no one wanted to admit defeat. Family members joined in, and everyone enjoyed. The kids were especially energetic, and songs from the 90s were the most popular.

Vijay enjoyed the event but kept his focus on Nisha. He wasn't interested in singing, but by chance, when it was the boys' turn and no one could recall a song starting with 'J,' Ravi saw Vijay and asked him to sing a song starting with 'J.'

Vijay, who was not familiar with songs, got hitched. No song came to his mind at that moment, but suddenly his eyes were fixed on Nisha, and it seemed she also wanted to hear from him. It was some kind of magic or coincidence that Vijay started to sing a song, and this song became his favorite for the rest of his life.

“Jab kisi ki taraf dil jhukne lage
Baat aa kar jubaan par rukne lage
Aankhon aankhon me ikrar hone lage
Bol do gar tumhe pyar hone lage
Hone lage, hone lage”

There was a round of applause for the song as Vijay sang it just before the time was about to end. The boys' group somehow managed to save themselves from losing a point.

But on the other side, Vijay was elated that he had somehow expressed his feelings to Nisha. He was surprised that this song was not in his mind earlier, and he was unaware of how, at the last moment, he started singing it. Overall, the result was good for Vijay—he felt there was no other way to express his feelings than at this stage.

Nisha was blushing. She liked the way Vijay expressed himself. She was happy, watching Vijay, and when Vijay looked at her, their eyes met. Now, there was a feeling of love and affection reflected in Nisha's eyes. For the first time in her life, she experienced this kind of feeling. She wasn't sure if it was called love, but whatever she was feeling and experiencing emotionally, she was happy to do so. The stars shone brightly in the clear sky, making the night look more beautiful than expected. It

was the atmosphere's effect—or perhaps she felt as if everything around her was making her joyful.

She had come to attend the marriage, but the feelings she was experiencing were more beautiful. Life was taking a new turn for her. On one side, she was preparing to go to the US to build her career in computer science, and on the other, she was feeling love for life. Both phases were important to her. At first, she was sure about going to the US, but now, in this new phase, she was awaiting some outcome. She liked Vijay but wanted more time to express her feelings and to understand whether this was just a temporary feeling or a lifelong one. She wanted to get to know him better before revealing her feelings.

The antakshari game ended without a winner. Both groups played well, and the best song was sung by Vijay. For him, it was more than just a song—it was a heartfelt expression of his feelings for someone special. Vijay wished he could spend this night forever, so he could enjoy more time with Nisha.

Now, the pheras were about to begin. The groom and bride were ready to perform the final ritual of marriage. Most of the relatives and kids had left by then, leaving only family members and selected friends. Pandit ji was performing the ritual, and the bride and groom followed his instructions.

Out of curiosity, Vijay asked, “Pandit ji, why can’t you do only one or two pheras and complete the ritual? What is the meaning of seven pheras?”

Pandit ji smiled and said, “There is meaning in everything in the Hindu religious texts. The seven pheras also have a deep significance, and marriage is not complete without them. It’s not just about taking seven rounds around the sacred fire; it also involves the promises that the bride and groom make to each other during these circumambulations. Each phera comes with a different vow that they pledge to lead a blissful life. When they make these vows, they pray to God for divine blessings.”

Phera no. 1 – Nourishment – In this Groom leads the bride in front of the sacred fire around which they both bow. As he does this, he prays that their married life together will be just as nourishing for each other.

Phera no. 2 – Strength – The Groom and the Bride now bow and pray for the strength to take care of each other, to be strong for one another also the couple’s vow to remain together even in the face of danger.

Phera no. 3 – Prosperity – The third phera is that of prosperity. The Groom asks God to bless their happiness and for this marriage to remain blessed with physical, emotional, and spiritual prosperity. In making these vows, the spouse reaffirms the vows of fidelity to

her husband and herself by accepting the responsibility of her new life.

Phera no. 4 – Family – The fourth phera is when the husband asks to bless the family unit and acknowledge his new wife. In her turn, she vows to ensure that her husband is as happy the best she possibly can. This vow of reciprocal affection is intended to strengthen the bond of the family and strengthen the couple's commitment to one another.

Phera no. 5 – Togetherness – this means staying together as a family through thick and thin. In this phera, the bride and groom are focused on their obligation to their children to come and make vow to be excellent and loving parents. All the while, as they seek the blessing of God for their future children.

Phera no. 6 – Health – The Husband asks the Gods to protect them from evil and misfortune for their entire lives, right up until her last breath. In wishing his wife's life is full of happiness and tranquillity, the bride and groom will also reaffirm his vow to ensure his wife's happiness. As a response, the bride affirms her unwavering loyalty to her husband.

Phera no. 7- Wisdom – As the seventh and final phera, vows are made to remain forever together, that is a more profound significance to this final phera. It not only declares the love and devotion of the couple to one

another in their marriage, but it also represents the final step in the binding of the couple together. They promise each other with these vows that they will remain together with wisdom, which is an absolute and explicit promise of love and devotion.

Wisdom is not just gained over a lifetime; it is accumulated over many reincarnations, as per Hindu beliefs. So, Mr. and all these seven pheras have very deep meanings. By acknowledging these pheras, the groom and bride begin their new life with hope for happiness and prosperity.

Vijay listened very sincerely; it seemed he was ready to take vows and make a commitment. Now, he understood that marriage is not just about finding a life partner, but also about love, commitment, family, loyalty, togetherness, and most importantly, responsibility.

On the other side, after learning about the importance of the seven pheras and the value of a relationship, Nisha was sure that marriage to someone is not just about affection or liking. It's a sacred union of two souls who are ready to respect each other and promise to stay together in any situation.

Both Vijay and Nisha were beginning to understand the true meaning of marriage, and their

perspectives about it were shifting after hearing the significance of the relationship from Pandit Ji.

As the pheras started, some guests who had been resting came to join this auspicious moment. Since the phera mandap was set up on the floor, everyone sat down comfortably. To Vijay's surprise, Nisha sat near him. Now, everything was in place, and Pandit Ji was about to begin the pheras. Sitting beside Nisha by luck, Vijay felt on cloud nine; he was not expecting this but was grateful to God for this precious moment.

As the phera began, Vijay whispered, "I pray to God that their union is blessed, and that their love and care for each other lead their married life to eternal bliss."

While Vijay was saying these words, Nisha sat beside him, nodded in agreement, and placed her hand on Vijay's. She seemed to feel the same for the couple. Vijay repeated softly, "God bless their union," and Nisha nodded again.

The pheras started, and Vijay noticed that Nisha's hand was still in his. He didn't pull back his hand, nor did he let her know that he noticed.

During the first phera, the groom and bride circled the sacred fire. Everyone watched the ceremony, but Vijay's mind was elsewhere. Deep in his heart, he had committed to himself that Nisha would be his life

partner. If it didn't happen, he decided he wouldn't marry anyone else. As the pheras continued, Vijay silently vowed in his heart:

- During the first phera, "I, Vijay, as a witness to this sacred fire, promise to be with Nisha always."

- During the second, "I promise to care for Nisha and remain united, even in danger."

- During the third, "I pray to God to bless us with happiness and prosperity."

As all seven pheras concluded, Vijay's hand was still in Nisha's. When the last phera finished, Vijay looked at her, and in that moment, she became everything to him—his life, his dream, his love, his inspiration. From the depths of his heart, he made all these promises to himself regarding Nisha.

Nisha also looked at Vijay's face. It seemed that he was about to express everything he was feeling for her at that moment. His emotions—love, care, compassion, happiness—were ready to be revealed, just waiting for a nod from his heart. His feelings were intense, but he didn't want to let them out all at once. He wanted to give himself some time to process and control his emotions.

All of this was very special to him, and he didn't want to spoil the moment. His emotions understood that this was not the right time to fully show themselves, but

they promised Vijay that they wouldn't stay hidden for long.

When Nisha looked at Vijay's face, he carefully concealed his emotions, but his eyes betrayed a hint of what he was feeling. Nisha sensed that Vijay had something to say or share but was holding back.

Naively, Nisha asked, "What happened?"

Vijay simply looked at her, and words, as if enslaved by his determination, refused to come out. He just replied, "Nothing."

The pheras were completed, and Vijay's promises had been made. Nisha, realizing that her hand was still in Vijay's, gently pulled back and said, "Sorry." Vijay, with a smile, simply replied, "It's okay."

"Having a life partner who is also your soulmate is a wonderful blessing," Nisha said softly, looking at the wedding couple.

"Yes, it is all about destiny that makes it possible. If something is in your destiny, then you will get it. You should just put your effort wholeheartedly. Life is beautiful when one finds his or her soulmate, who is ready to be with you in every situation and love you unconditionally," Vijay said to Nisha.

"Yes, you are right, and I think it's called true love—where expectations are less and devotion is more.

Like our parents, they love us without any conditions or expectations. Their sacrifices, devotion, and care, with top priority, make this feeling more special and called true love. We get lifelong love from our parents, and also from our siblings and friends. But when we find our love or soulmate for life, then it's like the cherry on the cake. Life becomes more beautiful and lovable with a person who understands us and has trust in us. Every problem can be solved with a positive mindset, and there is no problem that has no solution," Nisha was speaking with a lot of confidence.

"You are not only a science student but also a philosopher who has a lot of knowledge of love. You are an inspiration for youth," Vijay said, and Nisha liked his humor.

"Ha ha, nice joke," Nisha laughed.

"So, when are you going to the US?" Vijay asked.

"I am going next week. Actually, the earlier plan was for this day, but when I came to know the marriage date of Deepti, which falls on the same day, I postponed my program for next week. I did not want to miss this occasion. So I decided to become a part of this beautiful event," Nisha said, happy that she was going to fulfill her dreams. The reflection of her happiness was visible on her face.

Vijay was happy to see the smiling and proud face of Nisha and was hopeful for her bright future. He was aware that the time he had right now would never come back, so despite being worried about her departure, he was trying to live in the present moment. According to him, it was more precious than anything.

“So, are you from Mathura only?” Nisha asked Vijay.

“Yes, I am from Mathura. After college, I went to Delhi for competitive exam preparation and was selected by an engineering college in Pune. After engineering, I got an opportunity to work in an MNC in Gurgaon, but I live in Delhi—the city of my dreams. Vivek is my cousin. As I had some projects to work on, I did not have time to attend this marriage, but somehow I managed to come, and I am happy that I did,” Vijay explained, giving all his introductions in one go.

“Are you also from Mathura and did you graduate from here?” Vijay asked.

“Yes, I am also from this city and did my graduation here. While doing my graduation, I was planning to gain exposure, so I was also looking for a postgraduate program in the US. With the grace of God, I got selected for my PG in computer science, so I am going there,” Nisha said, excitedly.

“I am very happy that I somehow managed to stay here for a few days,” Nisha said.

Now, there was silence. Vijay, who was feeling happy, was aware that after one week, Nisha would be leaving. He did not know when she would visit India again from the US, nor her future plans, and he wasn’t even sure if she had already committed to anything. But ignoring all these thoughts, he focused again on the present. He was happy to have found a person with whom he could share his life. The future could bring anything or any change, but his heart was sure that he had found his soulmate.

No one was speaking; there were very few people around them, and a sense of separation lingered in Vijay’s heart.

“You are a nice person. It was nice to meet you,” Vijay broke the silence, and Nisha reciprocated with the same words.

“So, when are you going to Delhi?” Nisha asked Vijay.

“I’m planning to go the day after tomorrow, as I have some work commitments. I need to submit the final project output by this weekend, so I have to leave by Monday morning,” Vijay replied.

“Your flight to the US?” Vijay now asked.

“Yeah, I’m going next Sunday,” Nisha replied.

“You know, there’s a very famous coffee shop in Mathura, which has been my all-time favorite since my college days. It was the best place to hang out with friends or sometimes go alone. The solitude I found there is unmatched. Tomorrow, I’m going there with a very nice person I’ve been talking to,” Vijay said, inviting her for his first date.

He was not sure if Nisha would accept, especially since they had just met a few hours earlier, and the invitation for coffee might seem impulsive. But his heart was convincing him to go with the flow, and he decided to follow its guidance.

To his surprise, Nisha actually liked his sense of humor and the way he invited her. She accepted his invitation. The time was fixed for the afternoon at 2 p.m., and they exchanged phone numbers.

“Now I have to go, as the function is about to end, and I need to talk to Deepti. She’s leaving, and I won’t be able to meet her for some time, as I am also leaving,” Nisha said, getting up to walk toward Deepti.

Vijay sat quietly, not wanting to leave just yet. After a while, all the guests began to depart. There was a final goodbye from both the groom’s and the bride’s sides. The groom and bride then sat in their car, on their way to their destination.

Nisha also headed home, but before leaving, she came to say goodbye to Vijay. Vijay, who had been waiting for this moment, wanted to say something before she left the function.

But when Nisha said goodbye to him, he simply reciprocated in the same way. The words he had chosen to say to Nisha got stuck in his mind, and Nisha took a cab and left for her home.

Vijay was walking alone in silence. Generally, he loved walking in silence, and today he was experiencing the same. He was recalling all the memories of this marriage—from coming home to attend the wedding, seeing Nisha, and talking with her. The most precious moment was the phera, when Vivek and Deepti took their vows, and he was holding Nisha's hand. At the same time, he took a vow considering Nisha as his life partner. Then came the invitation for coffee the next day, and finally her departure. All this happened in less than twenty-four hours. It seemed like he had lived a whole lifetime in these hours—meeting his soulmate, talking to her, and then letting her go.

Life is a journey, and living it with love and joy makes it more beautiful. It is true that sometimes the journey itself is more beautiful and interesting than the destination. Along the way, we encounter happy and joyful moments, as well as loving and caring people who teach us valuable lessons about life and guide us toward

the future. In this way, we cherish good moments and the company of kind people. However, we also meet those who are not like-minded—they try to demotivate us and disapprove of our way of life. Experiences with such people can leave a scratch in our hearts. Therefore, it's better to move on and ignore such negativity. We should carry good memories to live our lives better. The hardships along the journey make us stronger and teach us lessons that benefit us and help us continue forward.

After some time walking alone, Vijay realized that it was time to go home, as everyone else had left and he was now alone. He took a cab and was on his way back. Sleep was far from his eyes, and as he traveled home, he reflected on his meeting with Nisha and the upcoming meeting at the coffee shop. He was planning to talk to her about her dreams, her likes and dislikes, her favorite things, her hobbies, her thoughts on friendship, and much more. One question kept running through his mind: her future plans. Would she stay in the US after completing her education, or would she return to India to settle down? It was possible she might find a job in the US and settle there, as the opportunities and quality of life in the US attract many people.

Vijay left this question to God and decided that whatever the future held, he was ready for it. He would respect the outcome, even if it was not in his favor. When he reached home and after changing, he was about to

rest, as sleep was not coming easily to him. Just as he was about to enter his room, he heard his mother's voice. He saw she was still awake and waiting for him.

"Mummy, why are you still awake? It's already late at night, and you should go to sleep and rest. Why are you still awake?" Vijay asked all these questions in one breath.

"Come here and sit for a while," his mother invited him. When Vijay sat down, she said, "I was waiting for you. Usually, you don't go to attend any functions, and if you do, you return on time. But today, you came very late, so I was wondering if everything is okay and why you are so late."

"Mummy, you should not worry about me," Vijay said, and with that, he put his head in his mother's lap. His mother knew that whenever Vijay was unable to speak his mind or had something heavy on his heart, he would come and rest his head in her lap like a little child. He found solace there. She understood that at this moment, he wouldn't speak about what was going on in his life. Out of respect for his feelings, she would not ask questions but instead offer her love and affection, which he needed the most.

Lying in his mother's lap, Vijay felt calm and better. The negative thoughts and worries about the future drifted away, replaced by a sense of peace and

positivity that swept through his mind and heart. In his heart, he was asking his mother, Am I doing the right thing? or Is the decision I made today correct? The most important thing he needed now was her blessing. Without her blessing, he felt he was nothing, but with her blessing, he had everything. It seemed as if he was getting a silent nod from his mother. No words were spoken between them, yet Vijay shared all his feelings and thoughts without saying a word. It also seemed as if his mother listened to everything he conveyed and, without speaking, responded by gently patting her hand on his head.

Sometimes, love needs no words to be expressed. A mother understands what her child wants to say, and a child receives complete love and care from his mother.

As Vijay remembered Nisha, he was unaware of when he fell asleep on his mother's lap. His mother realized that Vijay was going through something and reassured him that all would be well, with the grace of God.

The next morning, when Vijay woke up, he thought to himself that all of this might have been just a dream—or perhaps he had truly met his love and life. He felt fortunate to know that it was not a dream, but also that it was no less than a beautiful dream. He was feeling fresh and energetic. The fear of being separated from Nisha no longer bothered him. It seemed as if he

had received his mother's blessing, and when a child receives a mother's blessing, even the impossible can become possible.

He saw his father reading the newspaper and went to greet him with "Radhe Radhe." Since Vijay was born and raised in Mathura, the land of Lord Krishna, greeting with "Radhe Radhe" was part of his culture. He carried this tradition into his life and used to greet his friends and colleagues in the same manner. His father asked him about his life in Delhi and his work at the office. He also asked Vijay to stay for a few more days, as after joining the office, he had become busier and had less time to visit his hometown.

Vijay talked about his life in Delhi and his office. He mentioned how much he missed home-cooked food and sometimes asked his colleagues to bring an extra lunchbox from home, as he preferred homemade meals. He shared details about the various projects he was working on and the successful completion of those projects. He was happy to discuss all this, and his father felt proud upon hearing about his son's achievements.

Generally, fathers do not openly express their feelings toward their children, but that does not mean they do not love and care for them. They love and care, but often hide their emotions. Fathers always try their best to provide a better education and a better life for their children. To achieve this, they sacrifice and work

hard to meet their children's demands. A father's proudest moment is when he sees his children happy and doing better than himself. A father is one of the few people in the world who wants to see his children more successful than he is.

After a conversation with his father, Vijay was getting ready to go to the temple, as all family members were heading to Prem Mandir in Vrindavan for darshan. Vijay was a person who believed in God and karma. His belief was that God created this world, and we should serve mankind to make the world a better place to live.

He was particularly interested in following what was written in religious texts and was a great admirer of the Bhagavad Gita. According to him, this book contains answers to our daily life questions. Reading it can help us handle emotional, mental, behavioral, or social problems. The Gita provided a new direction in his life when he was preparing for engineering. As we all know, our mind is the most powerful tool we possess. If used correctly, it can lead us to prosperity and success. Conversely, misusing the mind can ruin a beautiful life and even endanger others. We can shape our lives based on how we use our mind. Chapter 6, verse 5 of the Gita teaches us the same: "Let a man lift himself by his own efforts, and let him not degrade himself. For this self is

the friend of oneself, and this self is the enemy of oneself.”

A life-changing moment for Vijay was when he detached himself from unnecessary distractions and devoted himself fully to his studies. He not only read the Gita but also understood its meaning and followed its teachings.

All the family members were ready, and they left for the temple. Upon reaching the temple, they proceeded for darshan. Standing silently with folded hands, Vijay was in a calm, devotional state. His mind was at peace, fully devoted to the prayer of Lord Krishna. This connection between God and devotee is profound. When we practice bhakti with full devotion, our voice reaches God, and it grants us spiritual strength to face life's challenges more effectively.

After praying, Vijay went to a nearby park and sat there alone, wanting to connect with nature. The sound of birds was melodious, and the atmosphere was increasingly devotional, with the aroma of arti from the temple filling the air. It seemed as though all his stress and anxiety had faded away, replaced by hope and positivity. Whenever Vijay visited the temple, he experienced the same sense of calm and peace. He always cherished this feeling, and whenever he visited his hometown, it became his routine to go to the temple. Life can be hectic, leaving little time for anything other than

work, but the peace and happiness found at home with family, close friends, and most importantly, at the feet of God, are irreplaceable.

After darshan, he returned home feeling blessed. His mind was filled with tranquility, and it felt as though the devotional elements had touched his soul. This time, thoughts of Nisha came to his mind, and a gentle smile appeared on his face. He was thinking about their upcoming meeting, and all the thoughts swirled in his mind about Nisha.

What should he talk to her? Should he give an indication of what he is feeling for her? But at the same time, the thought that it is too early to share his feelings with her kept bothering him. All these thoughts came to his mind, and he did not reach a conclusion by the time he reached home.

In the afternoon, he reached the coffee shop at a designated time and was waiting for Nisha. His heartbeat was faster than normal, and he was trying to stay cool and calm, but his heart was eager to meet his life partner.

Vijay, not having much sense of fashion, was giving his best, and according to him, his attire was good enough. Since it was his first meeting with Nisha, he made sure to bring a gift for her. After much thought, he arrived at a final conclusion: the gift should be beautiful

and should represent his feelings toward her, but it should not be a proposal. The gift should embody love and selflessness. It should not be in the shape of a heart or any ornaments.

After finalizing his choice, he got it wrapped. He was happy with his selection and hoped that Nisha would like it too.

Vijay was waiting and continuously checking the time and the entrance of the coffee shop. He arrived a little early. Each time someone entered, he hoped it would be Nisha, but upon seeing another face, he felt disappointed. People from different walks of life were sitting in the café—some college students with their friends, some office workers, and some single individuals enjoying their solitude. Vijay was daydreaming about his meeting with Nisha—how he would greet her, what he would say, and how they would talk. Lost in these thoughts, he did not realize that Nisha had arrived.

Vijay snapped out of his daydreaming and realized that reality is more beautiful than fantasy. Nisha was standing in front of him. She looked gorgeous, and her blue dress matched her personality. Blue was Vijay's favorite color, and seeing Nisha in his favorite color made him even happier.

“Hi, how are you, Nisha?” Vijay greeted her and asked her to sit. Nisha, smiling, sat down on the seat Vijay offered. Vijay checked his watch; she was early.

“Actually, there’s some preparation going on at my home for my upcoming trip to the US. I was busy with that and surrounded by my friends. Somehow, I managed to come here as I had committed,” Nisha explained in one go, saying everything she wanted to say.

“Relax, first make yourself comfortable,” Vijay said, offering her a glass of water. “First of all, no need to apologize; you’re on time. I also just arrived a little while ago, and I didn’t make any wait,” Vijay added.

“Thanks,” Nisha said, accepting the glass of water. She was actually thirsty and drank it in one go.

Now, Nisha was relaxed and sitting comfortably in front of Vijay. Vijay noticed a sense of relaxation on Nisha’s face, and he had been waiting eagerly to see her. Vijay was happy because this was his first date in life, but he was aware that it was just for him. Nisha had come to meet him because she found him to be a nice person and a friend, not necessarily a lover or soulmate. Vijay was not hopeless; he was thinking that one day she might ask him to come to this coffee shop at the same time, and then she might share her feelings. “Coffee @ 2 p.m.,” Vijay noted this in his mind, but right now, it

was just a dream, and he wanted to make this dream come true.

“So, you used to have a good time here. While coming here, I realized I had passed this road before, but I had never visited this coffee shop. But after coming here, I like this place. It has a very nice ambiance,” Nisha said.

“Yeah, I used to come here, and once you try the coffee here, you’ll love its taste,” Vijay replied. He was aware that the ambiance of a coffee shop can play a significant role in creating a memorable and inviting experience. He considered factors such as theme, lighting, music, furniture, décor, and most importantly, service. He chose this place for their first meeting, and he was sure that Nisha would like it. The memories created here would be cherishable for her.

“Okay, since you’re praising this place so much and I also like it, I’d like to thank you for inviting me here,” Nisha said with a smile.

“You’re welcome,” Vijay responded.

“So, you are enjoying homemade food and your mother’s love at home,” Nisha asked Vijay.

“Yes, of course. Whenever I am at home, I love to eat home-cooked food, even without asking my mother to prepare my favorite dishes. And you know, when I am on a short visit—just for a day or two—my mother gets

a little annoyed. She says that in such a short period, I can't enjoy everything I wish to, and she also complains that I don't talk as much as she expects. Life is heaven at home, and no place can replace the home vibes. Soon, you too will start missing all this," Vijay said.

"Yeah, you're right. The same is going to happen to me, as I am going away from my family for the first time—for two years. I hope I will manage and get through it," Nisha said, becoming emotional.

"You will do well. You know, the blessings of well-wishers are always with us, and they give us the courage and strength to do better in life," Vijay said, expressing his good wishes for her. Sometimes, even without saying a single word, we can communicate our feelings to the other person, and this can be understood.

"So, how often do you visit Mathura?" Nisha asked Vijay.

"Whenever I get time, I come here, and most importantly, I never miss a chance to be at a festival. It feels like we get recharged by visiting our home. The love and care of family make us happy and joyful. Life can be very advanced in today's world, and technology has changed the way we live, but I am sure that technology can never replace the value of human touch and emotions. Even though we have numerous gadgets and

technological advances, the love and care we receive from our family and loved ones are unmatched,” Vijay said.

“Yes, I agree with you. Technology and updated facilities are made to make our lives easier, but happiness and joy are still found in the little things and with family and friends. So, if technology is made for the betterment of humans and the environment, then we can say it is the cherry on the cake,” Nisha said.

“It was a good decision of yours to stay for your friend's marriage,” Vijay said.

“Yes, otherwise I would have a regret in my life that I did not attend the marriage of my best friend. And what's more?” Nisha asked, appearing naïve.

“If you had gone without attending this marriage, I wouldn't have met a wonderful person sitting right here with me, with whom I am about to have one of the best coffees of my life,” Vijay said, then asked a waiter to come and take their order.

“Ha ha,” Nisha laughed. “You have a good sense of humor.”

“So, what would you like? I mean, which coffee would you prefer?” Vijay asked.

“As I am here for the first time, I am not aware of the specialties here. So, I would request you to order

whatever you like, since you've been here before. It's better if you order," Nisha said to Vijay.

"Okay, then I would prefer to have a cappuccino for us. It's the USP of this café, and I'm sure you will love it," Vijay said, seeking Nisha's consent regarding the coffee choice.

"As you wish," Nisha agreed.

Vijay was reading a caption written on the wall: "Love and life both are beautiful if we have a cup of coffee," and he realized how this line resonated with him. He was enjoying his life's best coffee with the best person in his life—Nisha. Both at the same time, coffee @ 2 pm with Nisha.

"So, what are your hobbies, and what do you like the most?" Vijay initiated a conversation to learn more about Nisha.

"I love expressing my feelings and emotions through colors. I enjoy painting. It gives me a sense of fulfillment and is also a stress buster. I love to portray different emotions of human life—whether it's love, compassion, gratitude, fear, or attachment. For example, my last painting shows a newborn baby in the lap of his mother. One can feel the happiness and satisfaction reflected on the mother's face. I've captured the most powerful emotion—love—and the mother's love for her newborn is the epitome of that. A few days ago, I

painted a girl around 8-9 years old running after an airplane. This painting represents the power of dreams. A young mind, unsure of the future and unaware of life, sees an airplane and dreams of becoming a pilot, wanting to fly that very aircraft. A dream today can become a reality tomorrow if we have determination and dedication. A life without dreams or vision is incomplete.”

Last year, I made a painting of a lion roaming freely in the forest. Here, I depicted the importance of freedom, as well as the significance of wild animals and forests. If we protect wild animals, our forests will also be preserved. There should be a balance between humans and animals. Both existences depend on the forest. For the environment, we need forests because trees are our lifeline.

In order to expand our territory, humans have disturbed the habitats of animals, resulting in conflicts between humans and wildlife. Earlier, our forests were preserved partly due to the presence of wild animals and our old belief in maintaining balance. However, now, due to an increase in population and mostly greed, we are destroying everything that we have received as a gift from nature—be it rivers, oceans, forests, or wild species. We are destroying the entire system,” Nisha said continuously, and Vijay was paying close attention to what she was saying.

“Am I making you feel bored with my thoughts?” Nisha asked Vijay.

“No, not at all. I am really impressed by your thoughts, and the way you have expressed them through your artwork is amazing. It’s great to have awareness. Life may have numerous problems, but if we look for solutions, we can improve the situation. I also like that you have beautifully expressed your thoughts through artwork related to emotions like love, dreams, and freedom. What else do you like?” Vijay asked.

“The second thing I like most is traveling. I love visiting new places, experiencing different cultures, trying various foods, and doing adventure activities. Sometimes, I enjoy listening to songs. So, these are the things I like most. What about you?” Now, Nisha asked Vijay about his interests.

“Your second and third interests are the same as mine. I also enjoy traveling the way you do, and I prefer listening to melody songs and Ghazals. And you know, I also have a hobby similar to your first one, but in a different way,” Vijay replied.

“I didn’t understand,” Nisha said.

“As you love expressing your emotions through colors and painting, I love expressing my feelings, fears, dreams, thoughts, and imagination. Some unspoken or unshared words that I cannot say to the person I want to

speak to from the core of my heart—I write all of them in my diary. Writing is my first love. It helps me express myself. You know, after joining the office, it has become tough to find time for the things I love most, but with a bit of discipline, I have managed to keep my hobby alive,” Vijay said.

“Oh wow, it's really great to know that you are a writer. In my friend circle, there was no one who loved to write, but now I can proudly say that one of my friends is a writer. So, are you thinking of writing a book and getting it published?” Nisha asked.

“No, no, I don't have any plans to write a book, as I write only for myself. I have no intention of getting my work published,” Vijay replied.

“Why not? If you are good at something and it's your passion, then why not take one more step forward? It would be great to know that your work is appreciated, and even if someone criticizes it, you have a chance to improve. In both ways, you are the beneficiary,” Nisha said.

“You are a person with a very positive mindset and always have a plan for everything, but I will think over this, as it was never in my mind earlier,” Vijay expressed his feelings.

“Yes, you should. When your work gets published, send me a copy,” Nisha said with a smile.

“Yeah, sure. Why not? You’re the person who gave me this idea and motivated me to do this. You deserve not only the first copy of my book but also a grand treat from my side,” Vijay said.

“Okay, then it’s a deal. I’ll wait for that,” Nisha replied.

Now, the coffee had arrived, and Vijay asked Nisha to have some as well. With her first sip, a smile appeared on Nisha’s face. She nodded her head, giving a compliment, saying that it was one of the best coffees she had ever tasted. The compliment made Vijay feel proud, as he had chosen this place and coffee to offer Nisha, and she liked it.

“So, would you like to write something about me or about our first meeting at this coffee shop?” Nisha asked, taking another sip.

Vijay was thinking, “You are a person who has a special place in my life. You are the main protagonist of my life story, and how could I miss this moment? All my thoughts and feelings are written in my heart, waiting to be put on paper. I will write everything I feel about you—my emotions. But I am not sure when I will show you what I’ve written, as it will come from my heart only. If you understand me, and if, with the grace of God, you become my life partner, then I will only show you my

feelings and emotions. Until then, they will remain secretly safe with me.”

“What are you thinking, Vijay?” Nisha asked.

“I was just joking. No need to write about me, as I am not any special person,” Nisha said, observing Vijay deep in thought.

“Oh no,” Vijay said quickly, reacting as if he had come out of an illusion. “I wasn’t thinking that. I was thinking of something else. But I will write about you. By the way, you are my friend, and writing about you will be an honor and a duty for me,” Vijay added.

“Ha ha, so I will not stop you from performing your duty, as performing a duty is important,” Nisha said.

Life is full of ups and downs, and every little thing we face in life has meaning. Nisha was unaware that she was sitting with her future life partner. For Vijay, she was just a friend. Her feelings toward Vijay were about friendship, or perhaps she just needed more time to decide. But the coffee shop was a stepping stone in the beginning of Vijay and Nisha’s life story.

There were many discussions between Vijay and Nisha. They talked about their likes, dislikes, education, jobs, hobbies, and family. Time was flying, and Nisha realized it had already been two hours since she arrived.

“Vijay, really, it was a great time with you, here with one of the best coffees. Thanks a lot for that. I think I need to go home now,” Nisha said. Vijay didn’t want to end the meeting, as there were many things he wanted to talk about with Nisha. But he understood that there was a time limit. Casually, he asked Nisha about her flight timing, without giving any hint as to why he was asking.

“Yeah, you’re right. Now we should leave. I wanted to stay a bit longer, but it’s okay,” Vijay replied.

The moment of departure had arrived, but from his heart, Vijay wasn’t ready. He wanted to spend more time with Nisha and was feeling happy while being with her. He also knew that this might be his last meeting with Nisha for some time, as she was leaving for two years. He wasn’t sure if he would be able to meet her again during that period, especially since her arrival wasn’t very likely.

As they came out of the café, Vijay was thinking about giving her the gift he had purchased.

“Thanks again for the coffee. It was really nice, and I also enjoyed spending time with you,” Nisha said.

“You’re welcome. I also enjoyed spending time with you, and it was one of the best moments of my life. I’ve met someone I can call my friend, an inspiration, and a great artist,” Vijay replied.

“I think you’re saying more and giving me too much importance, which I don’t deserve. I am just a normal person, and I like seeing my friends grow and succeed in life,” Nisha said.

“No, I’m not joking. Honestly, you are a kind person with a pure heart. Thanks for coming,” Vijay said, taking out the gift from his bag.

“It’s for you,” Vijay said, handing the gift to Nisha. It was a joyful moment for Vijay.

“Thank you so much for your kind gesture, but what was the need to gift something to me?” Nisha hesitated while accepting the gift, but she was also happy that Vijay had bought something for her on their first meeting.

It’s not about the monetary value of a gift when we give it to someone; it’s all about the feelings we have for the person to whom we are giving it. It shows our love, gratitude, care, and happiness for that person. According to Nisha, one should not judge a person based on the monetary value of a gift. If one of our friends is going through a financial crunch but still wants to show happiness on our birthday, we should accept anything with love and respect from that person.

“Sorry, I didn’t bring any gift for you,” Nisha said, feeling a bit sad that she had not brought anything for Vijay.

“No need to apologize,” Vijay replied. “It’s okay. It wasn’t a task you missed. Actually, I went to get something, and I found this. I liked it so much that I thought I should give it to you. So I purchased it,” Vijay explained.

“Thanks again,” Nisha said.

“You’re welcome,” Vijay smiled.

Both of them came out of the café. Vijay was walking slowly, wanting to buy more time so he could talk to Nisha a little longer. As they stepped outside, the rain suddenly started. Neither of them expected the rain, as there were no clouds when they arrived at the café, and there was no sign of rain. Now they had to cover the distance by walking to catch an auto, as the auto couldn’t come directly to the café’s gate.

Nisha looked up at the sky and said, “By the way, I like rain and love to dance in the rain. I’m not a good dancer, but I dance alone in the rain so no one can watch me. But this winter, I wasn’t expecting rain. Now I’ll be late, and if I try to go in the rain, I’ll get fully wet and maybe fall sick.” In this sentence, Nisha expressed both her happiness at seeing the rain and her current difficulty caused by it.

Vijay was thinking about how to make Nisha comfortable while she called an auto or cab. While pondering, he saw that the rain was intensifying; if they

went for the auto now, they would both get completely wet. Some children were playing in the rain, and their scene made Nisha and Vijay nostalgic. The monsoon season brings many precious memories, and recalling them often makes a person nostalgic. But right now, Vijay's focus was to help Nisha avoid getting wet.

On that day, the rain seemed to have a different purpose—it wanted to make Vijay and Nisha get wet, and perhaps be their first rain together. The rain wanted to witness this beautiful moment, but Vijay didn't realize that. On their first meeting, he couldn't ask Nisha to come and enjoy the rain. His mind was filled with these thoughts. He looked up at the sky; the clouds weren't ready to settle soon. Vijay and Nisha waited, and after a while, the rain slowed down slightly. Without a second thought, Vijay pulled out his jacket, raised it above Nisha's head, and signaled her to move on. Seeing this, Nisha told Vijay that he would get wet, but Vijay replied, "It's okay," and they continued walking toward the auto.

Nisha glanced at Vijay, who was trying his best to shield her from the rain. A feeling of devotion reflected on his face. Despite getting nervous or annoyed, Vijay was determined to face the challenge, and this quality endeared him to Nisha.

While walking, there was no sign of irritation on Vijay's face. As a determined person, he kept walking

toward their destination. Fortunately, they found an auto as soon as they reached the main road. Vijay asked Nisha to sit inside and instructed the driver to drop her at her home. Seeing Vijay standing outside in the rain and getting wet, Nisha asked him to sit in the auto as well. Vijay said, "It's okay; I'll catch another auto and reach home."

Nisha realized the possibility of waiting in the rain and again urged Vijay to come and sit. This time, Vijay couldn't say no.

While sitting in the auto, Vijay noticed that he was getting wet, so he sat in the corner to protect Nisha from further getting soaked. He folded his jacket and held it in his hand. Vijay asked the driver to first go to Nisha's address, then drop him at his own home.

"I will remember this meeting—a meeting in winter that ends with rain," Nisha said, blushing.

"Yes, you're right—a memorable moment. I didn't expect this rain, but overall, I liked it. Sometimes, we forget what we discussed during our first meeting, but we never forget moments like this. It's true that sometimes the journey is more beautiful than the destination," Vijay replied.

"Thanks again for coming and making this day a memorable one in my life," Vijay said, his happiness and joy evident in his words.

“Same here,” Nisha replied.

Now, there was silence. Nisha and Vijay were just looking out of the auto as the rain continued pouring. The distance from the café to Nisha’s house wasn’t very far—about 15 to 20 minutes. Of that, only a few minutes remained before they reached her home. Vijay felt a twinge of sadness; the beautiful journey of today’s meeting was coming to an end. But he reminded himself that this is life: every journey has its end, but the memories created and moments savored during the journey are unforgettable.

The rain stopped, and Nisha’s destination arrived. She got out of the auto and said goodbye to Vijay, who also responded. She started walking toward her nearby home, where the auto had stopped. As she reached her gate, she looked back and saw Vijay still standing there. A feeling of care was evident on his face, making Nisha emotional. She greeted Vijay once more and said a final goodbye. Vijay, knowing she had reached safely, nodded to her as a sign of farewell.

Nisha smiled, opened the door of her home, and went inside. Vijay, after seeing her enter, asked the auto driver to go to his house. On the way, he was thinking about Nisha, and by thinking about her, he realized that he had gotten completely wet. But he was happy that Nisha had reached home safely. Vijay reached his

house, changed clothes, and sat with his mother. The next day, he was going to Delhi.

“You always come like this—no time for family. You just come and go with friends, and spend your whole time here and there,” Vijay's mother said.

“Oh, Mom, it's never like that. I came home for you, and you're talking like this. Love you, Mom,” Vijay said as he approached her and hugged her.

“I know you're very smart. You don't spend much time with me, and just by showing love, you want to show that you came for me. If you came, why don't you stay longer so I can see you every day?” his mother said, while pampering Vijay.

“Okay, Mom, as you wish. Next time I come, I'll spend all my time at home, and I won't give you any chance to say I don't spend enough time with you,” Vijay replied.

“Ha ha, I know you're just joking. Don't worry, I know you very well,” his mother said.

Vijay smiled and said nothing, but he promised himself that he would try his best to fulfill the commitment he had made to his mother.

After talking with his mother, Vijay went to his room to sleep. He was lying in bed, but sleep eluded him. The moments he had spent with Nisha that day

kept flashing in his mind. He was thinking—was it right to convey his feelings to Nisha? He hadn't done so. Maybe it was too soon, as this was only their first meeting, and proposing on the first day didn't seem appropriate, Vijay thought. He believed that for any relationship, some time should be spent together, and patience was necessary. Only then could both get to know each other better and understand one another. Vijay was firm in his decision—he would wait for Nisha. It might take time, but he was willing to wait. His thoughts kept running, and he was missing Nisha deeply.

Meanwhile, Nisha was busy with her parents, discussing her studies and plans to stay in the USA. Her parents were a little worried, as this was Nisha's first time going abroad, and for two years too. They had never lived without her; she was their only child, and sending her abroad alone made them anxious.

Her father was even more worried. Generally, he was a strong man with a reputation as a disciplined and strict manager. But whenever it came to his daughter going away from his sight, he would become worried. It was all out of care and love for her. He always wanted to give her the best and fulfill her dreams. So, when she asked him to let her go to the USA for her studies, he didn't say no. Instead, he made all the necessary arrangements and planned the funds for her education.

It wasn't easy for him to let her go for such a long time, but for her career growth and happiness, he decided to support her and let her pursue her dreams.

He was helping Nisha with her packing. He prepared a list and managed the items accordingly. When Nisha placed a photo frame of him and her mother in her bag, it made him emotional, and tears welled up in his eyes.

Nisha saw this and was moved too. She didn't say anything; instead, she stepped closer to her father, hugged him, and he reciprocated with love. Nisha's mother, who was also standing nearby, came over, hugged her, and said, "Take care of yourself, and most importantly, take care of your health."

"Yes, Mom, I will take care of my health and focus on my studies. You need not worry about me. Just take care of Papa, as he needs more care than I do," Nisha replied, hugging her father again.

"Papa, promise me you will take care of yourself and not worry so much about me. I will take care of myself in the best way, and you need to stay strong," she said through tears.

Lying in bed, Nisha was thinking about her plans for the US. She decided she would make the best use of her time, dedicating herself fully to her studies. She recalled all the memories of her childhood—the time

spent with her parents and friends. These memories made her emotional. As she reflected, her mind also drifted to Vijay. She thought he looked nice, caring, and principled. She liked the way he behaved and presented himself.

A wave of happiness swept over her. She was glad to have found a person as a friend who was not only kind but also respectful towards others. It made her happy when she found someone who shared similar thinking, attitudes towards life, struggles, mannerisms, and understanding. These similarities between Vijay and her made her feel grateful.

Nisha was remembering the time she spent with Vijay that day. She felt happy that she had managed to meet him. If it hadn't happened, she might have regretted missing the meeting. Suddenly, something struck her mind. She hurried to pick up her handbag. She opened it, and the gift Vijay had given her was in her hand. She gazed at the wrapped gift for a few seconds.

She silently thanked Vijay in her heart for the gift, while at the same time, she felt guilty for not giving him anything in return.

A lot of thoughts were running through her mind, and she was making assumptions and guesses about what the gift might be. She removed the wrapping and

opened the gift box. When she saw the gift, her eyes were glued to it. It was beyond her expectations and guesses. It was a small but very beautiful statue of Krishna and Radha. Made of marble, the artwork was impressive. Both Krishna and Radha appeared so glowing that they seemed capable of hypnotizing anyone. At that moment, she did not realize the significance of the gift because it was the epitome of love. The love between Krishna and Radha symbolizes a bond of trust that is unbreakable. It reflects devotion and commitment. By giving this, Vijay was indicating that his love for her was unbreakable and that he was committed to her. Nisha did not fully grasp this meaning at that time.

Nisha was happy that Vijay had given her such a beautiful gift, and she made sure to keep it with her. She thought she would take it with her to the USA, and she liked that thought.

She picked up her phone and typed a message: "Thank you," but before sending it, she paused for a second. Then she rephrased and wrote, "Thank you so much for such a beautiful gift. I really liked it, and I am taking it with me to my destination," and she sent it to Vijay.

On the other side, Vijay was resting and thinking about Nisha. His phone beeped after he received her message. He picked up the phone to see who had sent him a message late at night, and upon seeing that it was

from Nisha, he felt happy. After reading the message, he raised his head and said, "Thank you, God." A message of gratitude from Nisha was very special to him. He was thinking that if their journey together had started so beautifully with Nisha's company, then what would happen when they reached their destination?

A feeling of hope made him happy, but at the same time, doubt about the future also made him nervous. Since the hope was stronger, it did not completely override his feelings of nervousness.

The next day, Vijay returned to Delhi and resumed his work at the office. The projects he was working on kept him busy, and he immersed himself in completing them. Life changes with time and priorities. Vijay became busy with his work, while Nisha was waiting for her departure day.

Vijay missed Nisha deeply, especially when he was alone. After returning home from work, he often thought about writing down his feelings for Nisha and the moments they had shared. But something was holding him back. It felt as if someone was telling him to wait for the right time, as the perfect moment was about to come, and then everything would fall into place. He put aside his idea of writing about his feelings but promised himself that he would start soon.

He looked at his watch — it was 9:30 a.m. — and the flight was at 1 p.m. Today, Nisha was going to live her dream. Vijay was waiting at Delhi Airport. His eyes were searching for Nisha, and he was feeling nervous at the thought of saying goodbye. He hadn't informed Nisha about his arrival at the airport, wanting to surprise her. He had come early so he wouldn't miss this moment.

Soon, his wait was over as he saw a car stop, and Nisha stepped out of it. Her parents were with her. She unloaded her luggage from the car and moved toward the entry gate, but she paused before reaching it. Adjusting her luggage, she then stood with her parents. A mixture of joy and sorrow was evident on her parents' faces—the joy of her going to the USA to pursue her dream, and the sorrow of leaving her alone. Nisha wanted to spend a little more time at the airport with her parents.

Vijay was watching her from a distance. His heart was pounding faster, and he had also brought something with him to give to Nisha. He hesitated to go and meet her because he didn't want to interfere with her conversation or moment with her parents.

He thought he should wait a little longer. In the meantime, he considered calling or messaging Nisha so that when he finally met her, she wouldn't feel awkward in front of her parents. But fate had other plans. He saw

Nisha heading to a nearby inquiry counter, while her parents sat on a bench. As she approached the counter, Vijay came from behind and softly whispered in her ear, “Happy journey.” Nisha looked behind her, and a sweet smile appeared on her face upon seeing Vijay there.

“Thank you so much, Vijay,” she replied.

“I wasn’t expecting you to come here, but something in my heart told me you would come to say goodbye,” Nisha said. “Thanks for your gesture, and I am really happy that you came, my dear friend.”

A smile brightened Vijay’s face. “How could I miss this moment? I’ll see you again after such a long time,” he said.

“The last few days have been very tough and emotional for me. Leaving my parents and friends is hard. Finding a good friend like you, who has come to say goodbye, means a lot to me. Life is unpredictable. I made a new friend just a few days before leaving, and now I have to go far away. But whatever happens, happens for the best. Maybe it’s meant to be that I met you just before my departure. I will miss my family, my friends, and of course, my country, India. Everything will be new for me—new country, new people, new customs—so I’m feeling a little nervous about it,” Nisha shared.

“I haven’t slept well since the day I met you. I miss you so much, Nisha, and it seems I won’t be able to live without you,” Vijay was lost in his thoughts, speaking to himself, as if he was in another world. He forgot that he was with Nisha and that she was watching him, noticing that he seemed lost somewhere.

“Vijay, Vijay,” Nisha called out, bringing him back to the present.

“What are you thinking, Vijay? It looks like you got lost in your thoughts,” she said gently.

“Yeah, I was thinking that I met you just a few days ago, and today I am here to say goodbye to you. That’s life,” Vijay said. As he spoke, he became emotional, but he quickly changed the mood by saying something that made Nisha laugh.

“Oh, I forgot to give you something,” she said. Opening her handbag, she took out a diary and a pen.

“This is for my dear friend Vijay,” she said, handing over the diary and pen. “I know you write, so I’m gifting this diary and pen to you. You can write about your life, your dreams, and if you get some time, you can even write about me,” she added with a laugh at her last line.

“Thanks a lot for this precious gift,” Vijay said, accepting the gift. Now he understood why he hadn’t been able to write about Nisha earlier—destiny had

decided that he would only write about her in this diary. By accepting it, he promised himself that he would write about his love for Nisha and the moments they had shared. He would also write down Nisha's feelings, which he assumed she had, and if it was God's will, one day he would gift her this diary, full of emotion and love.

"How do you know I will come here? And how were you so sure that you should bring this gift for me?" Vijay asked, surprised, as he had never mentioned coming to the airport.

"I know everything because I have some special power. I can see the future. Please promise me you won't share my secret with anyone," she said seriously, looking into Vijay's baffled face.

"Haha," Nisha laughed. "Yaar, I'm just joking. I don't have any supernatural powers. It happened because my inner feeling was telling me you would come to meet me, so I kept this gift for you. And now, after you've come, you've honored my inner calling. Thank you for coming and proving my intuition right."

Vijay thanked God, feeling that somewhere deep inside Nisha's heart, there was some feeling for him. She might not be aware of it herself, and her feelings might still be uncertain, but Vijay was now sure that one day she would speak her heart and soul to him. That day

would be the most beautiful day of his life, and he would wait for that moment.

“Thank you so much for your kind words and this wonderful gift,” Vijay said. As he spoke, he set down his shoulder bag and took out a present he had brought with him.

“It’s for you,” Vijay said, handing her a gift.

Nisha was surprised because she hadn’t expected anything—Vijay had already given her a gift some days ago. The gift was wrapped, and she accepted it, saying, “Thank you.”

As time went on, it was finally time to say goodbye. Nisha said, “Goodbye and take care,” to Vijay and hugged him. With a very heavy heart, Vijay also said goodbye to Nisha. Now, Nisha was returning to her parents, and from a distance, Vijay watched her. It seemed as though something very precious had been taken away, and even after knowing this, Vijay felt helpless. Life was taking a new turn for Vijay and Nisha, and both were unaware of what the future held. Vijay did not want to miss a single second, so he kept watching Nisha, and his heart was aching. Sometimes, it is hard to see our beloved person going away from us.

Nisha reached her parents, who were waiting for her. Now was the time for her to enter the airport. She carried her luggage towards the entry gate; this was her

last moment with her parents at the airport. Tears welled up in her parents' eyes. This made Nisha emotional as well. She paused for a moment, then hugged them. She asked them to take care of their health.

Far from them, Vijay was watching. When Nisha entered the airport and was about to go through security, she looked back and gave a smile to Vijay, who reciprocated. Vijay's eyes wanted to say so much to Nisha, but his heart asked him to wait for now.

Nisha boarded the flight. After settling herself, she thanked God for making her dream come true. She remembered her parents, who had done everything for her happiness. As the plane took off, Nisha's dreams took a step closer to realization.

A feeling of achievement or euphoria surpasses everything. Nisha thought that when she returned, she would have her postgraduate degree, and it would make her parents proud. She observed the faces of the other passengers. Their expressions reflected their feelings. A couple was heading to the US to reunite with their children, who had settled there. Someone was traveling for a job, another for studies, and someone else was returning to the US after spending time with family in India. Happiness, achievement, and satisfaction were visible on their faces. The USA is known as the land of dreams. Many aspire to go there and make their dreams come true—whether for studies, jobs, business, or

research and development. The supportive environment provided by the government is outstanding.

India is also changing; many scientists now prefer to stay and serve there. A startup wave has swept across the country, but the American dream still holds a special charm that attracts many.

Nisha opened her bag and saw Vijay's gift. She took out the gift and began to unwrap it. Once again, the gift exceeded her expectations.

It was a small handbag containing several items. One by one, she took out the items. The first was colored pencils, which brought a smile to her face. The second was a wristwatch, which she liked. When she pulled out the last item, her eyes widened in surprise, and she was astonished. A feeling of respect washed over her—it was a copy of the Bhagavad Gita. Suddenly, her eyes noticed something else in the bag that she hadn't seen earlier. It was a postcard-sized card with a handwritten message.

She began to read the card while still holding all the gift items in her hands.

“Thank you so much, Nisha, for being a good friend. You are a person with a positive mindset, and as I know more about you, my respect for you and our bond grow respectively. Since you are a good artist, I am giving you these colored pencils with the hope that you will create more beautiful art. You are a kind person with

a pure heart. This Bhagavad Gita will bring positive energy into your life, and you will become a better person.

Last but not least, a watch for you. I know you are a disciplined person, and I am giving you this watch because my heart tells me to give it to you.

Thanks again, and I am sure your parents will be proud of you.

Take care and with lots of best wishes... your best time is about to come. :)

The card was finished, but Nisha was still reading it again and again.

In that small card, Vijay had written everything he wanted to say. He wrote about the value of friendship and life, and he provided her with a source of inspiration. He expressed his care, love, bond, support, gratitude, and best wishes for Nisha.

Nisha was speechless. How could a person she had met just a few days ago, with whom she had not even spoken much, know about her feelings, understand her, and be ready to support her in any situation? She was also growing closer to him as she learned more about him.

Feelings of love were developing in her heart, but she was unsure about acceptance. She still regarded

Vijay as a kind person and a close friend; however, there was no commitment from her heart yet.

Her heart wanted to take more time and was uncertain about how long it would take for her to realize that she also liked Vijay and that the closeness she felt was love.

Nisha was happy that someone she had met only a few days ago was becoming her close friend. In our lives, there are very rare chances to meet a person who is like-minded or an extension of ourselves. Sometimes we realize this and make our lives happier and more peaceful. Other times, we do not recognize the importance of the people around us, as we are all searching for something better, or we fail to see that what we already have is good for us.

Sometimes, in pursuit of gold, we lose the diamond. Everyone has their own criteria or imagination for finding a life partner or soulmate, and the expectations we hold are often high or influenced by movies and stories. When we meet our soulmate, we may not realize it immediately because our expectations are high, and that person may not meet them. So, we let go of that person and continue our search for our soulmate.

Nisha was holding the card; she had no intention of putting it down. It was like a child with his favorite thing, unwilling to part with it. Not only did the words

written on the card touch her soul, but also the feelings expressed in those words.

One by one, she looked at the gifts, each time offering thanks to Vijay. She touched the Bhagavad Gita with her head and made a promise to herself that she would read it. She would try to follow its teachings and encourage others to do the same, as it was meant for everyone.

When she saw the colored pencils, she wondered which sketch or painting she should create using them. After much thought, she finally decided to make something that would represent Vijay or be related to him.

At the same time, she opened the gift box and wore the watch. It was a white-colored watch with a beautiful bracelet of white and silver. She liked it very much.

After wearing the watch and keeping the book and pencils in her bag, she made herself relaxed and closed her eyes. The first thing she thought of was Vijay's face. She recalled the moments from sometime back when Vijay was waving his hand to say goodbye to her at the airport.

She tried to understand the expression reflected on Vijay's face at that time. Vijay was trying hard to look normal, but the pain of separation was evident on his face. He was attempting to hide his feelings, but he

somehow failed. She remembered the conversation she had with Vijay at the airport. His words conveyed care and emotional closeness. She again thanked God for having such a nice friend like Vijay.

Vijay stood at the airport for some time after Nisha's departure. It was a difficult moment for him. He never imagined he would meet his soulmate in this way, and it was even stranger that when he met his soulmate, he did not express his feelings, and now she was leaving him for such a long time. "Everything happens, happens for the best," Vijay thought. Maybe whatever is happening is for the good. When something is beyond our control, we should respect God's wishes and wait for the right time.

It had been an hour since Nisha left, and Vijay was still there. Now he was walking slowly toward the cab stand. The person for whom he had developed feelings of love had gone away. He was thinking about spending more time with Nisha, as there was so much he wanted to say, and he also wanted to hear from her. Since time was limited, he summarized his feelings in a few words and conveyed them in the gift. The note he had written the night before was very special to him. When writing it, many thoughts ran through his mind. If he had to write about Nisha, he could have written many pages, and still, much remained to be said. Every line he wanted to write was important. It was difficult for him to

summarize all his feelings in a small card, so he decided to write about the gifts he had given her. He thought that by describing the gifts, he could also express his feelings.

When he packed the colored pencils, he wrote a few lines about the importance of dreams and the good words needed to achieve them. It was about dreams and passion.

The second gift he gave was the Bhagavad Gita. While writing about it, he expressed that life is beautiful but also challenging. He wanted to motivate her and show her how to deal with depression and other emotions that might hurt her. His main purpose was to give her the book so she could strengthen herself mentally and emotionally.

The third gift was close to his heart—the watch. The purpose was that she would remember him whenever she wore it. She might not wear it daily, but whenever she did, a little memory of Vijay would come to her mind, which was enough for him. A part of his heart would always be with her.

He also wrote about her importance in his life and wished her the best for the future. Everything he wanted to tell her was in that small card.

Now he was thinking about the gift he received from Nisha—the diary. He pulled it out of his bag and opened it. A message was written on the first page, and

Vijay understood its purpose. He recalled the moment when Nisha handed him the gift and said, “You can write about me too.” Now he understood. Nisha wanted him to write about their journey together. The message read, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.”

The message was clear: Vijay should write about himself—about their meetings, conversations, and dreams. He considered the possibility that Nisha might have written it for some other reason, but his heart refused to accept any other thought. For him, that message was meant for him, and he believed he should respect its significance.

The next day, Nisha arrived in the USA. The excitement of reaching her final destination was overwhelming. As soon as the plane landed and all passengers were asked to deboard, Nisha felt immense happiness. She was at the airport, collecting her luggage and moving toward the exit gate. She was observing everything around her, and it felt as if she had landed on another planet. The crowd, the airport staff, and the atmosphere—all were new to her, and she liked every moment of it.

In the following days, she started to settle into her new life. She enrolled in college and found a hostel. The best part was that she got a roommate who was also

Indian. Her name was Kanika, and she was from Hyderabad.

Now, Nisha's life had completely changed. From morning till evening, she attended classes and practicals, and after returning to the hostel, she faced assignments and other study-related tasks. She kept her parents informed about everything, and they were happy to see her managing everything well. She was so busy that she did not reply to the WhatsApp message sent by Vijay.

Vijay was trying very hard to keep his mind busy but missed Nisha terribly. Memories of her kept surfacing everywhere, and he felt her presence constantly. He was waiting for her reply to the message he had sent, but when he received no response for the first two days, he thought she might be busy and hadn't seen the message. He convinced himself to wait patiently.

Vijay lay in bed, unable to sleep. Usually, he would go to sleep around 10:30 or 11:00, but tonight, he was feeling restless. The thought of Nisha kept running through his mind. He kept checking his phone, hoping for a reply. Suddenly, his phone rang. He picked it up and saw his mother's number on the screen.

A smile swept over his face; nothing could be better than love from his mother. The nervousness and uneasiness receded into the background.

“Hello, Mummy, Radhe Radhe,” Vijay replied once he received the call.

“Radhe, Radhe, Beta! How are you? Where are you these days? You’re not calling—don’t you care and miss your mother?” Vijay’s mother asked all these questions in one breath.

“Oh no, Mummy,” I am fine. I was busy in the office, so I was not able to call you,” Vijay explained, aware that his mother would soon ask more questions and might not accept his clarification.

“Are you okay? Your voice sounds like you’re hiding something from me. Usually, you don’t talk in such a gloomy tone. Tell me, what’s the problem? Is it in the office, or is your health not well? Tell me—I will come to you if you’re having any problems.”

Vijay thought that he could not hide his emotions. Whenever he was unwell or going through a tough phase, his mother always sensed it during their calls.

“Mummy, you need not worry. There’s no problem at the office, and I am healthy. Due to some project deadlines, I was busy in the office—that’s all, nothing else,” Vijay said. He tried to hide his emotions, maintaining a calm voice without nervousness or strain.

“Beta, in life, sometimes we want something so badly that even the thought of losing it can make us fearful. But everything in this world is arranged by God.

We may not understand the outcome now, as we are living in the present and cannot see the future, but God knows what is best for us. We should trust in God and give our best in whatever we do. By His grace, along with our hard work, focus, and determination, everything will be fine,” Vijay’s mother said.

Vijay was aware that his mother was not aware of the true reason for his condition, but her words made him realize how much a child can try to hide his problems. A mother may not always know the exact reason, but she can often sense what her child is going through and will always provide emotional support—something very important in handling any situation. Proper education can help solve problems, but wisdom shows the way to handle them. Wisdom gives us courage, and with patience, we can overcome any tough situation. Wisdom comes through knowledge and, most importantly, life experience—whether good or bad.

“Yes, Mummy, you are right, and I am fortunate to have a mother like you,” Vijay said with a smile.

“I know that you always give your nod to everything I say, but do you follow the same?” Vijay’s mother said while scolding him, but even in her scolding, there was a feeling of care and love.

“Oh, Mummy, I follow everything you tell me, but sometimes kids are not able to make decisions and may

make mistakes. For you, I am always a small kid, and I love to be the same,” Vijay replied.

“Hmmm, no one can win with you. Take care, and don’t worry. Everything will be fine,” Vijay’s mother said.

“Yes, Mummy, I will do that,” Vijay replied, and the call was disconnected.

Vijay, lying in bed, felt a sense of relaxation. He thought he should wait for Nisha’s reply and was confident that, sooner or later, he would receive it. Thinking about Nisha, Vijay didn’t realize when he drifted into sleep.

The next day, Vijay got up a little late. When he saw the time, he hurried to get ready and left for the office. As Vijay was busy at work with continuous calls from clients, he was unable to check his mobile. In the afternoon, when he finally took out his phone to check notifications and messages, something caught his eye, and his hand stopped. His eyes brightened, and his heart beat faster than usual. There was a message from Nisha.

The message had been received at 11 a.m., but Vijay saw it only at 3 p.m. He was frustrated with himself for not checking the phone earlier. If he had seen it sooner, he could have replied immediately and started a conversation. He calculated the time difference

between the US and India and realized it was late at night in the USA, so she might have gone to sleep.

He opened the WhatsApp message from Nisha and began to read:

“Hi Vijay, sorry for the late reply. I was busy and didn’t check your message. My classes have started, and I am adjusting to life here. It’s truly a place of dreams, and I am loving it. My schedule is very hectic, so I won’t be able to call you in the coming days. Take care. Bye.”

After reading the message, Vijay experienced mixed feelings—happiness and sadness. He was glad that Nisha had sent him a message, which was very important to him. However, she hadn’t asked about him, and he was told to wait for her call.

In response, Vijay initially typed a long message expressing his emotions, but he soon deleted it and simply wrote “Take care” before sending it to Nisha.

As the saying goes, whatever happens in life, life does not stop. Since Nisha went to the US, there has been a long gap, and Vijay had sent several messages to her. Yet, Nisha had not read those messages, and her replies usually came after a long delay with very brief messages.

Nisha was completely busy with her studies, and on the other side, Vijay involved himself in more work. However, there was not a single day when he did not

miss Nisha. He started to write about her and the moments they had spent together.

At night, he used to write in the diary that was gifted by Nisha. Initially, it was difficult, but as soon as he opened the diary, memories of Nisha flooded his mind. At the same time, he would close his eyes and remember her face. Love is beautiful, but distance makes it painful too. In Vijay's case, it was one-sided, and all he could do was hope that soon everything would be alright.

There was no other option for Vijay but to wait. But then something happened that he had not anticipated. Nisha's phone number, which Vijay used to send messages to, was disconnected because it was an Indian SIM. Nisha had taken a US number, so now Vijay was unable to send messages to her. The new number had not yet been shared with him. Now, there was no way for Vijay to contact Nisha, as he didn't have her email ID.

Nisha was living her life the way she wanted. When she had free time, she would pick up her bag and explore the area near her campus. She got her first chance to explore another city after two months when her college group decided to go to New York. The city was more beautiful than she had imagined, with tall buildings, clean roads, expensive cars, and beautiful parks and monuments—everything she liked. The thought of

settling in the US was developing in her heart and mind. Day by day, she spent more time there, and her desire to settle there grew stronger. What more did she want in life? A good standard of living, better conditions, and great career opportunities. She was not concerned about finding a life partner; for her, the priority was to complete her education first.

Life is unpredictable—what is a good day today might be a bad day tomorrow. Nisha was so involved in her life in the US that there was nothing else on her mind. But soon, the pressure to settle down and excel academically began to make her nervous. She started to experience feelings of low spirits, and despite her best efforts, the results were not as she had hoped. The fear of the future was overshadowing her present.

One night, lying in bed, Nisha reflected on everything happening in her life. She remained calm and tried to find a way to overcome her fears and pursue her dreams. She got up quickly and rushed to pick up one of her bags. She opened it and pulled out the items inside.

First, she took out a watch—the same watch gifted by Vijay. She had kept it in the bag after wearing it for three or four days, as she found it not suitable for daily wear because it didn't match the current trend. She placed it on the table. Next, she pulled out a colored pencil, then a statue of Radha Krishna, and finally, the

last item she was searching for—her Bhagavad Gita, which was now in her hand.

She thought that she had heard a lot about this book, and even Vijay had suggested she read it daily. However, she did not pay much attention to Vijay's words and kept the book in the bag along with another gift given by Vijay.

Nisha was flipping through the book and contemplating how it could potentially change her life. Vijay had told her that she needed to read it every day, understand its meaning, and try to incorporate its teachings into her personal life.

All books seemed to convey the same message, as she thought, and she wondered what was so special about this one that she needed to follow. She felt that she lacked the patience to read the entire book and was about to put it down on the table. But somewhere inside her, there was a voice calling her to give it one more try—a voice urging her to read something. She heard that voice and decided to open the book randomly, then began to read a shloka.

The shloka which she start to read was (chapter 6 verse 5)

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ ५॥

uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ nātmānam avasādayet
ātmaiva hyātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ

the translation – “elevate yourself through the power of your mind and not degrade yourself, for the mind can be the friend and also the enemy of the self”

This was the first time in Nisha’s life that she read the Book Gita, and the first few lines or shlokas she read became extremely meaningful for her. After understanding their meanings in detail, she was astonished to realize that this book contained wisdom for a whole lifetime. She understood that thinking positively and training her mind to focus on positivity would help her find the path she was searching for. She decided that this was a discovery of a new way of life.

She thought about reading more shlokas but then decided that she would first establish a discipline for herself and read the Gita daily. That, she believed, would be the best way to truly understand and honor the book.

She cleared the table and placed the Gita on one side, alongside a statue of Radha Krishna. She also

put the colored pencil on the table, but there was no intention of drawing any sketches.

From the next day, she began her mornings by reading the Gita, then committed herself fully to her studies. The overthinking that had been leading her to depression and anxiety started to fade from her life. Her life was beginning to change, and that change was evident. The more she read the book and followed its teachings, the more her life took on a new shape. The fear of an uncertain future vanished, and she started focusing on the present.

Discipline helped her stay focused, and with better time management, she was able to perform much better than before. Seeing Nisha's transformation, her roommate Kanika was surprised. For her, it was nothing less than magic. The same girl, Nisha, who was once facing depression, was now more cheerful and doing well in her life.

One night, after having dinner, Nisha and Kanika were discussing their lives. Kanika was a very simple and down-to-earth person. She asked Nisha whether she had been following the Gita since childhood or had started recently.

Nisha replied that she had begun reading this book just a few days ago. During their conversation,

Nisha talked about Vijay. Their discussion went on for a long time. She shared how she had met Vijay, their meetings, and departures. She also mentioned that Vijay was the one who had given her the Gita as a gift and had motivated her to read it daily. She spoke about Vijay and told Kanika that she considered herself lucky to have a friend like him, showing her all the gifts she had received from Vijay.

“When was the last time you talked to him?” Kanika asked Nisha. There was no answer from Nisha, as it had been more than two months since she last sent a message to him. In her life in the US, she had become so involved that she hadn’t realized it had been a long time since she had spoken with Vijay. Kanika was unaware of this and asked the question out of curiosity.

“I haven’t messaged him in a long time, and since I changed my number, he doesn’t have my new one—because I didn’t share it with him,” she said, looking sad. She realized that she should have spoken to Vijay.

“It’s not too late. You can still talk to him, and always remember, we should care for the people who care about us. Some good people we find in our lifetime are very precious. We should cherish them as treasures. From what you’ve told me about Vijay, I

can sense from your words that he is a kind person with a pure heart. He cares about you, and he's probably been waiting for your call," Kanika said.

Nisha was silent. Her meeting with Vijay was brief, but in that short time, Vijay understood her well. He always behaved kindly, and in his words, there was a sense of care. She still remembers Vijay's sense of humor, which never failed to make her happy and to bring a smile to her face with his wit and good humor. There was something special about Vijay. When she met him for the first time at a wedding, she agreed to meet him the next day at a coffee shop. She thought that he would come to the airport to say goodbye, and Vijay proved her expectations right by coming there to meet her.

"Yes, you're right, Kanika. It was my mistake—that when I came to the US, my priorities changed. For me, everything became about myself and my career. Apart from my parents, I have not contacted anyone in India these days. I haven't even reached out to my best friend. Deep down, I felt superior to them and believed I was better than others still in India, so I kept my distance. I was thinking of living a lavish lifestyle and settling here. Somehow, I forgot the value of love, friendship, and the importance of my motherland, India.

Now I can understand that we all love to improve ourselves and aspire for a good standard of living. However, that does not mean we should be left behind by the people who have always been with us on our life journey. A satellite should not forget the importance of the rocket once it reaches its destination, space. It was the rocket that propelled the satellite into space. I may settle here or anywhere else in the world, but I will always keep myself connected with my family, friends, and well-wishers” Nisha said.

“That’s great! I think you are becoming more mature by living with me. You should thank me,” Kanika said with a smile. Kanika was happy that, regardless of the reason, Nisha was beginning to understand the true value of life.

It was night, and Vijay was holding the diary that had been a gift from Nisha. He started to write in it. Day by day, with little effort, he filled many pages. Vijay poured his heart into his words, and with emotion, he crafted beautiful sentences. This marked the beginning of his writing journey, as he had committed to himself.

Sometimes, while writing about Nisha, Vijay would become emotional; a sense of longing would sweep over him. He did not even have her photo on his phone. Instead, he remembered her by recalling

the memories they had shared. Outside, heavy rain was falling. Vijay approached the window and gazed at the rain. The rain reminded him of the day he met Nisha; after their meeting, it had also rained heavily. The rain brought back those memories, and as he remembered Nisha, Vijay began to write.

When a person writes, the most important thing isn't just the choice of words but the emotions behind them. When emotions are mixed with imagination, they create a new world. Feelings play a vital role, and words flow onto paper effortlessly. Vijay was reminiscing about those moments, and the atmosphere around him seemed to influence his writing. He was crafting a new world of imagination—writing about how his next meeting with Nisha might be.

It had been many days, or even months, since he last spoke to her or received any message. But hope is a different matter altogether. It can make everything seem possible. Hope never turns negative; when it is strong, plans for the future never surrender to difficulties.

Vijay was thinking that the next time he met Nisha, he would choose the location based on her preference. He would also make that day special for her. It would be a gift from him, and he intended to treat Nisha in the best way possible. His imagination,

fueled by love and hope, poured onto the paper in the form of words.

He lost track of time and only realized that the rain had stopped when he looked at his watch—showing it was 2 a.m. He decided to stop writing and go to sleep. The next day was Sunday, but it was already late. Vijay closed the diary and went to sleep, feeling a sense of satisfaction. Today, he had written something very special—his feelings and visions for their next meeting.

Vijay was very hopeful that the day would come when he would meet his life partner, Nisha.

The next morning, Vijay's sleep was disturbed by the sound of an incoming phone call. It was a WhatsApp call, and since the number was new, Vijay was unable to identify who might be calling him at such an early hour. For a moment, he considered disconnecting the call, but then he thought that it might be someone in urgent need of help. Understanding the situation, Vijay picked up the phone and said, "Hello."

There was no reply from the other side. Wanting to know more about the caller, Vijay again asked, "Hello? Who is calling, or may I know with whom I am speaking?" Still, there was no response. Vijay

waited for an answer, but the caller on the other end did not speak and also did not end the call.

Vijay said again, “Hello,” and this time, he heard the sound of a deep breath on the line from the other side.

“Nisha,” Vijay said slowly, as the first word that came to his mind upon hearing the voice.

“Nisha, is that you?” Vijay asked again.

“Hi Vijay,” the caller replied. Hearing this voice, Vijay was on cloud nine. His eyes sparkled, and he sat up straight on the bed, fully attentive. He knew without a doubt that it was Nisha’s voice. He could never mistake her voice.

“Hi Nisha, how are you?” Vijay asked. He was overwhelmed with happiness at hearing her voice, but he kept his excitement hidden and responded calmly.

“I’m good, Vijay. But how could you tell it was me without speaking?” Nisha asked.

“Because you live in my heart, and I know the voice of my heart. I love you more than anything, and I can feel your presence every moment. You are my life—no, I say you are my extension—someone I know very well and understand deeply,” Vijay whispered to

himself. He realized that these words were meant for his heart alone.

“Hi Nisha, I just thought it might be you, so I asked if you were Nisha,” Vijay said, masking his emotions and speaking only in a normal tone.

“By the way, it’s nice to talk to you after such a long time. How is your life going in the US, and how are your studies?” Vijay asked Nisha.

“Vijay, everything is good here. Life and studies are both going well. First of all, I want to apologize for not replying to your messages and not calling you. I got so busy with myself that I forgot to respond. I saw your message but didn’t reply. Sometimes I am so careless. Sorry, Vijay,” Nisha said sincerely.

“It’s okay, Nisha. No need to apologize. I understand that you were in a new place—everything was unfamiliar to you—and sometimes it takes time to settle down. Tell me, how are you feeling there? How many new friends have you made? And what are the new places you have visited?” Vijay inquired.

“I like everything here, Vijay—the campus, the classes, my hostel, and the environment for studying. It’s very nice. People from all backgrounds come here to study, and there’s so much to learn. I have very few friends here, and my roommate Kanika is one of them.

She's a very nice person from Hyderabad. The weather is very pleasant, and the cleanliness in this country is mind-blowing. People here understand the value of cleanliness and take responsibility for keeping the environment clean. The standard of living is very high; people respect each other's privacy and follow the law. Rules and regulations are strict here, and anyone who breaks a rule has to pay a fine, regardless of their status. I like this place so much that I am thinking of settling down here after my studies," Nisha said.

Nisha's last words hit Vijay like a thunderstorm. She was thinking of settling there, and here he was, thinking of settling with her. For a moment, Vijay was speechless, but he soon regained his composure. If it was the wish of God, he was ready to accept it. For him, the most important thing was Nisha's happiness. If she was happy, and he was not part of that happiness, he was willing to accept it.

"That's wonderful to hear. I'm glad you're enjoying that place and living your dreams," Vijay said.

"You know, Vijay, there was a time when I was going through mental depression, and the 'Bhagavad Gita' helped me a lot. It not only helped me come out of that difficult phase but also gave me a new

perspective on life. Thank you so much for that; you are such a kind person who understands me well. Tell me about yourself—what’s going on in your life? Have you started writing in the diary I gave you? And I’m sorry I haven’t created any artwork with the pencil I gifted you, but I’m sure I will do it soon.”

Nisha kept speaking continuously, and Vijay listened intently to every word, not wanting to miss anything she said.

“I also haven’t started writing in the diary yet, but I will definitely begin soon. And no need to thank me for the Bhagavad Gita; it was in your destiny that it came into your life,” Vijay said, secretly hiding the fact that he wanted to keep the diary as a special secret for himself for now. He wanted to give it to Nisha at the right time.

The diary was very close to Vijay now. He had been writing his feelings in it, and it was his wish to fill it with more memories. He longed for more conversations and meetings with Nisha, hoping to write more about their bond. He thought he would give this diary to Nisha when she became his better half. If that didn’t happen, he decided he wouldn’t share it with her; his feelings for Nisha would remain confined within the pages of his diary. He wouldn’t allow anyone else to touch it. Only Nisha, if she

shared the same feelings for him, had the right to read it.

If she married someone else, he would hide his feelings from her. This diary was very special to him, and only Nisha had the right over it.

Having personal privacy, he believed, meant keeping some things hidden—things he didn't want to share with others. It's not a matter of right or wrong; it's a personal choice, and maintaining this freedom gives a person the courage to hold onto their thoughts.

"You tell me, Nisha, when you will visit India. I know it's an unusual question, but I'm just asking out of curiosity," Vijay inquired.

"Vijay, I won't be able to come until my course is completed, which will take two years. So, for the next two years, I'll be here and won't be able to visit. I miss my parents so much, but there's nothing I can do. It's called life. We live far from our families to earn a better life, and once we achieve that, we care for them even more. I'm living my dream here, but deep down, I feel an emptiness. When I'm emotionally distressed, I can't put my head on someone's shoulder and cry—something I used to do with my father," Nisha said, her voice heavy with emotion. There was a long pause on the line.

“It’s okay, Nisha. It happens,” Vijay comforted her. “To fulfill our dreams, we have to make sacrifices. Living away from family is tough, but when you achieve your goals and become successful, your parents will be the happiest people on earth. They’ll feel that all their sacrifices and hard work have paid off. They don’t want anything in return—your happiness means everything to them. So, focus on your goals. Other things will come naturally, like ripe fruit falling from a tree,” Vijay said, trying to motivate her.

“Yeah, you’re right, Vijay. You have a very clear perspective on life. Now tell me about yourself. I’ve been talking about myself and sharing my problems. Tell me how your parents are, how your job is going, what’s new in your life, and when was the last time you visited Mathura?” Nisha asked all these questions in one breath.

“Yeah, I am very good. My family members are also fine. I am doing quite well at my job, and life is going smoothly. It has been the same month since I visited Mathura—that was also the month I met you there. Do you remember the coffee shop where we had coffee?” Vijay asked.

“Yeah, of course I remember. How could I forget such a lovely moment spent with you there? No doubt,

the coffee was one of the best I ever had. You're lucky that next time you visit Mathura, you can go there again, but make sure you miss me—because I'm here and can't visit. Still, you must go there," Nisha replied, and the memories of the coffee shop made Vijay nostalgic. He promised Nisha that he would visit that coffee shop once he went to Mathura.

"Okay, Vijay, take care. Goodbye," Nisha said, ending the conversation. Vijay wanted to talk more, but he was happy that, after so many days, he had been able to speak so extensively with Nisha. That was enough for him.

"You also take care, and best wishes for your studies and a happy life there. My best wishes are always with you. Take care again, and bye," Vijay responded.

"Thanks for your good wishes. Take care, enjoy your life, and bye," Nisha said before the call was disconnected.

Vijay was holding the phone, a ray of hope being born again today because he was happy after talking with Nisha. For a few minutes, he didn't put down the phone, as he was recalling the conversation he had just had with her. He thanked God for connecting him with Nisha. His love for her was pure, and his feelings

were without any expectation. He prayed to God to give Nisha strength to deal with homesickness and to do well in her studies.

He pulled out his diary and looked at it. He opened the page where he had last left off—an unfinished note or a page filled with thoughts. His mind was filled with many emotions and ideas. So, he took his pen and began to pour his feelings and emotions onto the paper. Words were his best friends—they never betrayed him. As he wrote, deep meanings flowed effortlessly through his mind, and he simply transcribed them onto the paper. He knew when the words should come and which should come first.

Vijay was writing about his current conversation with Nisha, infused with his own emotions.

When a person is in love, life changes. They start thinking about that person constantly, care deeply for them, and are willing to help in any way needed. Selfless love is above everything else, and fortunate are those who find true love.

Time was passing, and both Vijay and Nisha were busy with their lives. But now, something had changed—they no longer experienced a communication gap. They called each other more

often, and their discussions grew deeper. Day by day, Vijay felt himself becoming more attached to Nisha. His commitment towards her grew stronger. However, on her side, Nisha still considered him only a good friend.

Vijay also did not say his love feelings to Nisha, as he did not want to be away from Nisha. He wanted to be her good friend and was waiting for the right time.

Nisha was doing good as her first semester result was out and she scored well. When Nisha told this to Vijay, Vijay was happy and congratulated her on her success. The bond of trust and care was getting deeper between them. Both of them used to discuss their professional life and tried to help each other. Whenever Nisha got emotional while remembering her parents Vijay used to talk to her and make her comfortable.

Now there were 2nd semester exams and Nisha was preparing for her exam. She was focused and putting her all effort into doing good in the exam.

Chapter 5

Give Me Another Chance

Life takes unexpected turns, and when it does, no one can predict what will happen. One day, after finishing her classes, Nisha was coming out of college and was discussing an upcoming exam with her friends. As she walked, she noticed a missed call from her home. She checked her phone but saw that there were no missed calls. She felt uneasy because this was unusual—usually, if she missed a call, there were no further attempts from home. But this time, something was different.

She dialed her father's number, and her mother picked up.

"Is everything okay?" Nisha asked, her voice trembling, as a moment of silence followed from the other side. Her heart sank at the thought of something untoward happening.

“Nisha, your papa had a heart attack, and we have admitted him to the hospital. But the situation is very serious, and I don’t know what to do,” her mother said, her voice trembling. “I’ve called my brother, but he’s currently in Mumbai. I’ve informed him, and he’s coming here, but it will take some time. I’ve also contacted your uncle and other relatives, but they live far away, so it will take time for them to arrive. I’m very worried,” her mother added, distressed.

Since Nisha’s uncle and other relatives lived far from Mathura, they were informed, but urgent help was needed immediately. That’s why her mother was so worried.

“Mummy, please stay calm,” Nisha urged. “There’s no need to panic. You’re there, and Papa needs you most right now. You have no other option but to stay strong. Since you’ve informed Uncle, help will arrive soon. Let me see what I can do from here,” Nisha said, trying to comfort her mother.

“This is the first time your father is in such a situation,” her mother said, voice breaking. “I’m worried about what might happen, especially since you’re not here.”

Seeing her mother break down, Nisha also became worried. She knew she had to act quickly and find

someone who could support her mother during this difficult time.

Nisha was anxious because she knew her mother would find it hard to handle everything alone. After considering her options, she tried to recall who she could call immediately for help. Among her friends, Vijay's name came to mind. She thought of calling him, but wondered whether he was in Delhi or if he could help, especially since his father was in Mathura. These thoughts ran through her mind as she hesitated.

She dialed Vijay's number. The phone was ringing, but there was no response. She hung up and, after walking, entered her hostel room. She was beginning to feel paranoid; tears welled up in her eyes as she thought about not being at home to help her mother. For the first time in her life, she felt helpless.

Time was very critical—each passing minute made Nisha more anxious. She sat on a chair, resting her hands on the table, and bowed her head onto her hands. Her eyes fixated on the objects on the table, eventually stopping on a small statue of Krishna. She also recalled a verse from the Geeta, which teaches one to remain calm in every situation. She closed her eyes and prayed to God, asking Him to keep her father safe.

Suddenly, her phone rang. She looked at the screen and saw Vijay calling. Without hesitation, she picked up the call.

“Hi Nisha, how are you? Sorry I couldn’t take your call earlier—I was in a meeting. Tell me, what’s going on?” Vijay asked.

“Hi Vijay, I need your help,” Nisha said, her voice tinged with worry. There was a sense of distress in her tone, and Vijay immediately sensed that something was wrong. Usually, Nisha was cheerful and full of energy, but now she seemed overwhelmed.

“Nisha, first of all, don’t worry. I’m always ready to help you in any situation. Now, tell me what happened. Is everything okay?” Vijay asked.

There was a long silence. Vijay waited patiently for Nisha to respond.

“Nisha,” Vijay repeated, and at that moment, Nisha broke down. Her sobs were audible to Vijay.

“Don’t cry, Nisha. Please tell me what happened. Trust me, I will do everything I can to help you,” Vijay reassured her, trying to calm her down.

“Vijay, my father had a heart attack today. Medical help was provided initially, but his condition may worsen. I’m very worried. I can’t find anyone who can respond immediately to this situation. Do you have any

work commitments?” Nisha asked, updating him on the situation and checking if he was busy.

“First, give me the contact number of the concerned person,” Vijay said. “I will talk to them. I have contacts in Mathura, and I will arrange for an ambulance to take your father to a hospital in Gurgaon. It’s a very good hospital, especially for heart patients. I’m heading to the hospital now to organize the further process. We’ll admit him in an emergency, and then see what further action is needed. Don’t worry about my work commitments—I will manage everything. Right now, the most important thing is your father’s life. Just send me the number,” Vijay instructed.

“Thanks, Vijay, for your words. I am sending you the number of my mother, and I will also inform her that my friend will call her and update her on everything you have shared,” Nisha said. After saying this, she said goodbye to Vijay, and the call was disconnected.

“Hello, Mummy. I’ve given your number to one of my friends, Vijay. He will call you shortly. There’s no need to worry—everything will be fine. He’s making all the arrangements,” Nisha reassured her mother.

“Ok, beta. I’m at the hospital, and the doctor is suggesting we shift Dad to another hospital since the required facilities are not available here,” her mother replied.

“Don’t worry, Mummy. We’re arranging an ambulance to admit Papa to a hospital in Gurgaon. There, he will receive the best facilities, and my friend is handling all the arrangements,” Nisha said.

“Who is this person?” her mother asked.

“Mom, he’s my friend from Mathura. He’s currently working in Gurgaon. I will discuss everything with you later. I’m also sharing his number with you. Don’t worry—I’m also looking into options to come to India,” Nisha replied.

“Ok, beta. You don’t need to come now, as your exams are going on. We will manage everything here,” her mother said. “Ok, beta. I’ll call you later, as the doctor is calling me now,” she added before disconnecting the call.

After that, Nisha sat down. Memories of her father flooded her mind. He was the person who, despite all difficulties, always motivated her to study. He was the person Nisha was most attached to. Love and affection are vital parts of life, and Nisha felt fortunate to have found both in her parents.

After an hour, she tried calling Vijay to get an update. His phone was showing as switched off. She wondered what had happened—why Vijay’s phone was not reachable. She then tried calling her mother. The

phone was ringing, but there was no answer. A flood of thoughts rushed through her mind.

Did Vijay contact her mother? Did he arrange the help her father needed? Why wasn't her mother answering? Was she with the doctor, or had something else happened? Many thoughts raced in her mind, some negative and anxious. But her heart told her that everything was fine, and she clung to that hope.

Nisha had no other option but to wait. As she waited, she gradually fell asleep in the chair. Her brief sleep was interrupted by the ringing of her phone. She quickly picked up the call—it was her mother.

“Hello, Mummy. Why weren't you answering my calls? How is Papa? Did you get a call from my friend Vijay? Where is Papa?” Nisha bombarded her mother with questions, not giving her a chance to speak.

“Nisha, now you calm down. Everything is fine,” her mother replied gently.

“How can I be okay, Mummy? Vijay's phone keeps switching off, and your phone was ringing, but you didn't answer. Please, tell me what happened,” Nisha's voice was tense, eager to know the current situation.

“Nisha, sometimes when we pray to God from the bottom of our hearts, the Almighty listens and helps us in mysterious ways,” her mother said.

“I don’t understand, Mummy. What do you mean?” Nisha asked, her mind struggling to grasp her mother’s words.

“Actually, I was so worried about what might happen that I couldn’t think clearly. Then your friend Vijay called me. He asked for my current location, and within thirty minutes, an ambulance arrived outside the hospital where your father was admitted. A man stepped out of the ambulance, reached my room, touched my feet, and introduced himself as Vijay’s friend. He told me that Vijay had arranged the ambulance, and we were on our way to Gurgaon hospital. We discharged your father from this hospital and headed there. The ambulance was equipped with all necessary emergency supplies, and a doctor was present to handle any situation. We reached Gurgaon earlier than expected. Throughout the journey, Vijay kept updating us. When we arrived at the emergency ward, Vijay was already waiting. He had discussed your father’s case with the doctor, and after admission, your father was given the required medication.”

“Now your father is admitted, his condition is under control, and he’s out of danger. Surgery will be required, but it will take 2-3 days, and until then, he will remain in the hospital. There’s no need to worry—everything is under control. And I want to tell you why I said that God manifests in different incarnations.

Today, thanks to Vijay, your father is alive and safe. He is a very kind person—he not only took your father’s case seriously but also inquired about my well-being, arranged food for me, and stayed with me continuously. I am immensely grateful to him for making that decision, and by the grace of God, it turned out to be the right one. His phone was switched off when I tried calling, as I was with your father and couldn’t check my phone. Now, don’t worry—your brother is on his way here. Vijay managed the entire situation with great care and courage. It felt as if I knew him very well, even though it was our first meeting. Thank God for sending him to save your father,” her mother recounted the entire journey.

“Where is Vijay now, Mummy?” Nisha asked.

“Vijay has gone outside to arrange accommodation for me. There are several houses available that offer daily stay options, so I plan to stay nearby the hospital. Vijay is searching for a suitable place. I will stay here for a few days until your father is discharged,” her mother explained.

“Mom, I want to come there. I’m feeling very uneasy and missing Papa terribly right now,” Nisha said.

“Beta, don’t worry. Everything is fine now, and I am here. Your maternal uncle and other relatives are also

coming. We will take care of your father. You focus on your studies; we will manage everything here. If you leave your exams to come, it could affect your studies and future. I understand your pain, but you need to stay strong and stay focused. That will be the greatest gift you can give your father,” her mother advised.

“Mom, I miss you and Papa so much. I want to be with you in this situation,” Nisha replied.

“Nisha, take care of yourself. I am here to take care of everything. I also want to meet you, but please understand the situation,” her mother said softly, trying to convince her to stay calm.

“Okay, Mummy. You take care of Papa and yourself too. I’ll take care of myself here. Bye, and please update me. Let’s have a video call when Papa is ready to talk,” Nisha said before ending the call.

All the confusion and tension eased from Nisha’s mind. She could breathe freely again, feeling relief that her father was in the right place at the right time. Her respect for Vijay grew even more—he proved that a true friend in need is indeed a friend indeed. She was grateful to Vijay and thanked God for sending such a friend who saved her father today. She remembered the day she met Vijay, never imagining that one day he would help her in such a critical situation. A deep sense of gratitude

filled her heart. What Vijay did for her would always stay with her for a lifetime.

After some time, she called Vijay again. This time, the phone rang, and he answered.

“Hello, Nisha,” Vijay replied.

“Hello, Vijay. Thank you so much for your help. If you hadn’t been there today, we might have received very sad news. You brought a smile and relief to my mother and me. You are truly an answer to all our prayers. I don’t have enough words to thank you,” Nisha expressed her gratitude, searching for the right words to praise him.

“Nisha, you’re making me feel like an outsider by thanking me repeatedly. I did what any friend would do. I’m happy I could help. Now that your father is out of danger, that’s enough for me. I’ll ensure he returns home in good condition and can live normally again,” Vijay said confidently.

“Vijay, as you told me not to thank you, but I must. When I heard about my father’s attack, I was overwhelmed and couldn’t think straight. Suddenly, your name came to my mind, and I wondered if I should call you. I was unsure if you could help or if you had gone somewhere else. My thoughts were racing, but I felt a voice inside urging me to call you. When I dialed, your phone was off, and I was clueless. But by the grace of

Krishna, your call was finally answered, and everything is clear now. You truly made my day,” she said, her voice filled with emotion.

“Nisha, everything in life happens according to our destiny written by God. I just became a medium to help you. Today everything happened for the best. In 2-3 days, your father will undergo surgery by one of India’s best cardiologists. So, don’t worry further. I will be here if you need any more help,” Vijay reassured her.

“Vijay,” Nisha said softly, “today you touched my soul. I will always remember your kindness and your actions.”

Vijay was speechless. Her words meant a lot to him. In that moment, he felt he had achieved everything he had wanted in life—respect from the person he loved. He had already surrendered his heart to her, and today, he had given his soul to this relationship. Love and care would always remain, even if they never became life partners. He would cherish these beautiful memories and, if they were not destined to be together, he would not complain to God.

Nisha waited for his response, but he was silent, lost for words.

“Nisha, thank you for giving me such a special place in your life. You will always be my best friend.

Whenever you need me, just talk to me. I'll do my best to help," Vijay said.

"Yes, tell me," Nisha replied.

"Never break this friendship. We may be in different parts of the world, but we will stay in touch. No matter how busy life gets, or if we can't meet in person, we will always discuss our problems and find solutions. Are you ready?" Vijay asked.

"Yes, Vijay. You have my word—I will never break this friendship. You can always count on me. There are very few people I trust deeply, and you are one of them. I respect you and am grateful to have a friend like you," Nisha said.

"Alright, Nisha. I'll check the latest updates now. Take care, and I'll be here if you need anything. Bye," Vijay said.

"Ok, Vijay. You too, take care. Bye," she replied, and the call ended.

Both Vijay and Nisha missed each other—Vijay because he loved her, and Nisha because of his kind gesture today. Their feelings might be different, but the essence was the same—care and selflessness.

Nisha's exams had started, and she was busy studying but kept updating her mother. On the day of her father's surgery, she prayed to God for success. Late

that night, when she called her mother, the update she received made her smile—surgery had been successful, and that news was very precious to her.

On the day her father was discharged, her mother called her with the good news.

“Hello, beta. How are you? With the grace of God, everything is done. Today, we are discharging your father from the hospital, and we will be going to Mathura. Your father is doing well, and the doctor has said that he is recovering quickly and should fully recover within 2-3 months,” Nisha’s mother said.

“Yes, Mummy. I am very happy that everything is fine and that Papa is going home. Now you need to motivate him to have faith and not lose self-confidence. Strong willpower will help him recover faster, and then he can live life the way he used to. But he will also need to maintain a proper diet and take precautions for the future. I am missing him so much,” Nisha replied.

“We are also missing you very much, and I am very thankful to your friend Vijay. Not only did he help me get admitted to the hospital, but he also visited daily in the evening after work. He spent 2-3 hours with us and made sure I had no problems. He discussed everything with the doctor and kept us updated. He arranged a place for us to stay, and food was also arranged by him. You are lucky to have a friend like him. He is caring,

mature, and knows when to take decisions and how to handle situations. He has helped us like a family member. When your father met him and learned that he had arranged everything in such a short time, he became emotional and blessed him abundantly,” Nisha’s mother said.

Nisha listened attentively as her mother praised Vijay. She felt proud to have a friend like him, who always helped her with wisdom and actions. Whether it was a gift of the Bhagavad Gita, which helped her through emotional and psychological lows, or his support when her father was ill, Vijay had always been there for her. In every tough situation, Vijay had shown that he was someone who stood by her and celebrated her achievements. All these circumstances made her believe that he might be the right person for her as a life partner, but she was not yet able to recognize these feelings as love. She still considered Vijay as a very close or best friend.

“Yes, Mummy. I know he’s a good person, and as you said, how he helped us makes it even more meaningful. You know, I met him just a few days before I was coming to the USA. I wasn’t very sure when I called him for help, but by the grace of God, he turned out to be our savior,” Nisha said.

“Would you like to talk to both of them?” her mother asked.

“Both of them? I’m a bit confused,” Nisha replied.

“Yes, your father and Vijay. Vijay is with your father now, and soon we will bring him home,” her mother explained.

“Yes, Mummy. I want to talk,” Nisha said.

Her mother made a video call, and it was a very precious moment for Nisha. She saw her father waving his hand, and when the phone was placed near him, his face lit up with a smile upon seeing Nisha. On the other side, Nisha was overwhelmed to see her father. Vijay, standing nearby, watched and took out his phone to capture this beautiful moment. Tears filled Nisha’s eyes as she missed her father deeply, but at the same time, she felt happiness seeing him go home.

“Papa, don’t worry. Now you’re fine, just need to take care and follow the doctor’s instructions. Remember, we all promised to go to Kashmir together, so you have to recover soon. I love you so much,” Nisha said.

Her father just smiled and nodded, then said softly, “Beta, I miss you so much and love you. You take care,” before asking Vijay to speak with Nisha.

“Hey, Vijay! How are you?” Nisha asked.

“I’m fine, and today we’re taking Uncle home. We all miss you,” Vijay replied, intending to say he missed her so much, but he included everyone in the message.

“Are you also going to Mathura?” Nisha asked.

“Yes, I will make sure he reaches home safely. It’s my responsibility,” Vijay said.

“You’ve already done so much for us. Now my mother and uncle will take care of everything, and you can continue with your work,” Nisha said.

“Nisha, today is Saturday, my weekly day off. I’ve planned to go with Uncle and also meet my family. That way, I can do both—drop Uncle off and visit my family and friends,” Vijay explained.

Nisha’s face reflected happiness and gratitude. Vijay was smiling, happy to see her in a good mood. He never imagined he would meet Nisha’s parents this way, but now he had not only met them but also won their hearts. Meeting with Nisha’s extended family was a wonderful experience. Everyone praised him and asked him to stay in touch. Through this kind gesture, Vijay was not only earning a place in Nisha’s family but also creating a wave of love touching her heart.

Vijay was on his way from Gurgaon to Mathura, having decided not to inform his mother beforehand so he could surprise her. During the journey, he was chatting with Nisha’s mother, answering her questions

about his hometown, his company, family, hobbies, and more. His answers were gentle and respectful. The conversation was long, and when it ended, Nisha's mother thanked Vijay sincerely. Vijay, on his part, felt emotional as she held her hands in a gesture of gratitude. He told her not to fold her hands in front of him because she was like a mother to him. Whatever he did was purely out of friendship and a desire to help her family, especially to save her uncle without any personal interest.

After dropping Nisha's father at his home, Vijay returned to his own house. He felt a deep sense of achievement—seeing that Nisha's father was doing well. At his home, Vijay rested. In recent days, he hadn't slept well—after work, he used to visit the hospital and then return to his room in Delhi. But all his fatigue and lack of sleep were washed away once the operation was successful. The happiness he felt banished all tiredness.

He spent two days at home and, before leaving for Delhi, visited Nisha's house to meet her parents. He told them to call him if they needed any help. Vijay was becoming like a family member in Nisha's home. When he returned to Delhi, Nisha's exams were over. Their frequent calls increased—sometimes daily, sometimes every other day.

One day, Nisha created a painting, pouring her heart into it. It took her several days to complete, working

on it in her free time at night. She decided to show it to Vijay, as it was very special to her.

She called Vijay and told him she had a surprise, but he would have to guess what it was.

“Nisha, at least give me a hint so I can guess,” Vijay said.

“No, Vijay. You’ll have to guess yourself. I’m not giving any hints,” Nisha replied.

“Alright, then give me some time,” Vijay said, starting to guess. He guessed various things, but all his guesses proved wrong. Seeing that he couldn’t figure it out, Nisha decided to reveal it herself. She put her phone on video mode, brought it close to her work, and said, “This is for you, Vijay.”

The artwork was beautiful. For a moment, Vijay’s eyes were glued to the screen, captivated by the masterpiece. Nisha had touched on a very important part of his life—his mother’s love. The artwork depicted a lady holding a school bag in one hand and holding her son’s hand with the other, as he headed to school in his uniform. The care, sacrifice, and love of a mother were evident on her face—a determined, confident woman ready to do anything for her children, and a child eager to fulfill his dreams. It was the perfect depiction of a mother’s love and a child’s innocence.

Vijay felt a wave of nostalgia. He remembered his school days when his mother would come to pick him up. On the way home, he would often demand things that tempted him. His mother, balancing love and discipline, would meet those demands with care. She had taught him the value of love, family, money, and how to use resources wisely—less wastage, more gratitude. Vijay was thankful for all her teachings. While he learned academics in school and college, his moral foundation was laid by his parents.

“Thank you so much, Nisha, for this beautiful artwork. It’s not only a fine piece of art but also has a deep meaning—most importantly, it’s very close to my heart. Thank you again, Nisha,” Vijay said.

Nisha smiled, happy that her artwork for Vijay, depicting his mother’s love, had touched him. In response, Vijay praised her and expressed how much he liked it. He said he wanted to keep it, framed, and asked her to bring it when she visits India.

“Sure, I made this just for you. When I come, I’ll give it to you. After all, it belongs to you,” Nisha said, her face shining. Vijay saw her beautiful smile, and this day became special for him.

Their long conversations continued, and the bond between them grew stronger. There was a subtle line between friendship and love—no one could predict who

would fall first. Vijay was the first to develop feelings and was waiting for the right moment to express himself.

One day, Nisha was talking to her roommate, Kanika.

“How is Vijay?” Kanika asked.

“He’s good, and as you know, he helped at my home. Because of him, my father is doing well,” Nisha replied, pride evident in her voice. She now felt proud whenever she talked about Vijay—she knew she was lucky to have such a good friend.

“Yeah, I’ve heard about that. I always thought Vijay was a nice person, but now I’m sure of it. You’re fortunate to have a friend like him who’s always with you in every situation.”

“Yeah, Kanika. Sometimes I think it’s very important in life to have a good friend,” Nisha said.

“So, have you thought about the future? Would you like to make your best friend your life partner?” Kanika asked.

“What are you saying, Kanika? We’re just good friends. I haven’t thought about that, and Vijay has never said anything like that to me. I think we’re fine as just friends. And how did you come to think that we should be together as life partners?” Nisha asked.

“Look, Nisha. Both of you are good friends. You understand each other well. You’re always ready to help each other. He’s always done everything possible to make you happy, and he’s stood by you in every situation. Even though he’s far away, he cares and helps. You share your life with him, and he misses you when you’re not around. Your family knows him, and they like him. So, what more do you want in a life partner? I believe he has feelings for you, but perhaps he’s unable to express them. You should think about this and tell him how you feel before it’s too late. I think you two are made for each other,” Kanika said.

“Nah, Kanika, you’re overthinking. I haven’t thought about a life partner yet. My focus is on my studies and settling down. Vijay is my best friend, and I believe he feels the same for me. There’s no need to rush into anything,” Nisha replied.

“Nisha, I’m not saying that both of you should focus solely on relationships and abandon your careers and dreams. I’m saying that if you have feelings for each other, you should at least convey or express them. See, Vijay is already working, and there might be discussions about his marriage. Sooner or later, his family will arrange his marriage. He might think that you don’t like him as a future life partner, or he might accept an offer from the marriage proposal that comes to his home. You also don’t know if he’s involved with someone else. Since

you both aren't talking about this openly, one of you will end up getting married first, and then the other might regret not trying. Life is very short for regrets," Kanika said, and her words made Nisha go deep into thought.

Nisha remained silent, lost in her own reflections. She was contemplating whether Kanika was right. During this time, she had come very close to Vijay. For her, Vijay was like an extension of herself—a lifeline. She had never discussed this matter with him, and she didn't know if he was in a relationship or if his family was looking for a life partner for him. Now she was completely confused. On one side, she wasn't sure if she wanted him as her life partner, but on the other, she was attached to him and wanted him to be her lifelong friend. She thought she should wait. Important decisions about her life shouldn't be rushed.

Nisha decided that she would gradually try to understand Vijay's feelings about a future partner without directly asking him. She wanted to know what was in his heart and mind first. She also made up her mind that if Vijay was engaged or in love with someone else, she would accept reality and not pursue it further. But if Vijay loved her and expressed his feelings, she would consider it seriously.

One thing was clear—Nisha was attached to Vijay, but she wasn't ready to admit to herself that her

feelings were love. She was uncertain about her own emotions and didn't want to lose Vijay.

After talking to Nisha, Vijay sat on a chair and took out his diary from the table drawer. Today, he was planning to write about his conversation with Nisha.

He began to write, and words flowed from his heart—love and emotion spilling onto the pages.

“Why does it feel like I can't live without her? I am becoming more attached to her day by day. Even though she's not here with me, I feel her presence in every moment. She is my life, my strength, my aspiration, the foundation of my devotion. She is the true definition of love. Describing my love for her is impossible; it's like an ocean—measuring its depth is beyond reach.”

Vijay continued, pouring his feelings into the diary:

“Nisha, I don't know if you love me or not, or if you love someone else. But I have devoted my life to you. You are my love, my life, my partner, my best friend—everything to me.”

His feelings were manifesting in words, getting recorded in his diary. It was late at night, but Vijay couldn't sleep. He missed Nisha terribly and wanted to call her, but after some thought, he refrained. He decided that if Nisha called him today, he would confess his feelings. He set a condition for himself: if he received a call from her, he would propose. As he waited, the

clock showed 2 a.m., and exhaustion overtook him, sending him into sleep.

The next morning, he was awakened suddenly by the ringing of his phone. Hoping it was Nisha, he picked up eagerly. But it was his mother calling. A call from her always brought a smile to his face.

“Hello, Mummy. Radhe Radhe,” Vijay greeted.

“Radhe Radhe, Beta. How are you? Did you wake up now? Look at the time—9 a.m.—and you’re still sleeping. When will you get ready and go to the office?” his mother asked in one breath, peppering her questions.

“Mummy, I’m good. Yes, I just woke up, but today is Saturday, and my office is closed. So I decided to sleep in,” Vijay replied.

“Okay. If you’re not going to the office today, does that mean you’ll sleep all day? Wake up now—I have some very important news for you,” his mother said.

“What happened, Mummy?” Vijay asked.

“You need to get ready to go to Uncle’s house in Preet Vihar. Dress well,” she instructed.

“Uncle’s house? And why should I dress up well? Is there some function there that I need to attend?” Vijay asked.

“No, there’s no function. But someone known to your uncle is coming to see you. His daughter, Vidita, is also coming. She’s a nice girl, and your uncle wants you to meet her. If you both like each other, your father and I will come there. It’s just a formal meeting. So, get ready and reach there on time,” his mother explained.

“Mom, what is this? I’m not going there to meet anyone. I’ve told you before—I’m not getting married anytime soon. I’ll let you know when I decide,” Vijay said, clearly not interested in meeting any girl. He was firm about not wanting to involve himself in any expectations from the girl’s side.

“What’s the problem with you? I’m not saying you should marry immediately. Marriage takes time. This is just the first step. You’re not even ready for that,” his mother argued.

“Mom, I know all this, but I don’t want to meet anyone. Please don’t force me,” Vijay responded, frustration evident in his voice, which he tried to hide but which came through in his tone.

“Vijay, are you okay? If you don’t want to go, don’t go. But why are you frustrated? Is something bothering you? Please tell me—I’ll help,” his mother said, concerned.

“Mom, there’s no problem. I’m fine. Just please understand me. I need some time. I’m not trying to hurt

you or refuse you intentionally. But right now, I don't want to talk about this," Vijay said, speaking from his heart.

"Beta, I understand and care for you. I'm not asking you to go to Uncle's house today. I'll manage that. But promise me you'll tell me everything you're going through. Take care of yourself and keep faith in God. Everything will be fine," his mother reassured him.

"Thanks, Mummy. I will take care of myself, and when the time is right, I will tell you everything," Vijay replied, feeling a bit relieved. He was glad she didn't force him to go. Subsequently, many marriage proposals came for Vijay, but his mother refused most of them, trusting his judgment and not wanting to decide without his consent.

Life moved on. Vijay remained busy with work, but his love for Nisha grew stronger. He often wrote in his diary, hoping someday she would read his words.

Meanwhile, Nisha was busy with her studies but kept in touch with Vijay. One night, lying in bed, her thoughts wandered.

"Whenever I feel sad or down, I feel like he's encouraging me. It's as if he's telling me, 'Nisha, why are you feeling gloomy? Why believe you won't get through this? I am with you. Your failure is my failure. Don't let yourself down. Just do your work with the right

attitude, and everything will be fine.’ His voice carries a positive energy that always motivates me.”

She continued, reflecting:

“I’ve always been a winner, but the fear of failure used to scare me. Vijay came into my life, and my whole philosophy changed. Life isn’t just about winning; it’s about managing failure and rising again to achieve your goals. Now I believe I can not only win but also turn my defeats into victories. My past, my present, and my future—everything has taken a new shape because of him. When I think about fulfilling my dreams, his trust and confidence in me give me strength.”

She remembered a past incident when Vijay encouraged her during a difficult time. The message he sent—“Nisha, the way you’ve handled these past months, the silent battles you fought mentally and emotionally—has transformed you into a stronger person. Celebrate your strength. I wish you a great life ahead. Enjoy life, be grateful, and stay strong. P.S. I am proud of you...” —had stayed with her. Reading it always brought a smile to her face, and she missed Vijay. She wanted to talk to him about their relationship, but she kept postponing it, waiting for Vijay to take the initiative.

One day, during a video call, she noticed Vijay looked tense. His manner of speaking was different—

more subdued. Normally, they would talk openly, but today, he was silent on that topic. Curious, she asked him.

“Vijay, you look a bit sad today. What happened?” Nisha asked.

“Oh, there’s nothing to worry about. I’m fine. How’s life going on with you?” Vijay replied, hiding his emotions. Over time, they had become so familiar that they could tell when the other was troubled.

“Vijay, tell me what’s wrong,” Nisha pressed again, sensing something was off.

Reluctantly, Vijay decided to share what was on his mind.

“Nisha, as you know, when we reach a certain age and life is settled, our families start thinking about marriage. My mother is asking me to get married,” Vijay finally said.

“So, what’s wrong with that? One day, you will marry. Why are you worried?” Nisha asked, her heart pounding with anticipation. She knew that whatever he revealed might change her life, but she was ready.

“It’s not that simple. I don’t want to keep my family in the dark, but I can’t tell them what’s truly in my heart,” Vijay explained.

“Vijay, I don’t understand. You don’t want to hurt your family, but you’re not sharing what’s in your heart either. Please, tell me what’s going on. Trust me—I’ll help,” Nisha urged.

Vijay hesitated, not wanting to reveal his feelings or bring up this topic. But his bond with Nisha was strong, and he couldn’t lie to her.

“Nisha, my family is looking for a bride for me, but I’m avoiding it,” Vijay admitted, pausing.

“Why are you avoiding it?” Nisha asked.

“Because I love someone,” Vijay finally said, his voice trembling for the first time as he revealed his love life.

Nisha’s heart raced. She was eager to know who this girl was.

“Then talk to your family about her. I’m sure they’ll understand, and you can marry her,” Nisha encouraged.

“Nisha, the situation is different. It’s not that my family won’t agree or that the girl’s family is not agreeable,” Vijay said.

“Then what’s the reason for your worry?” Nisha asked.

Vijay paused for a long moment, then decided to let her know the truth.

“Nisha, I don’t know if the girl I have feelings for loves me back or not. I haven’t expressed my feelings to her, and she hasn’t done so either,” Vijay explained.

“Vijay, if you love her, then why don’t you express your feelings? Maybe she also loves you, but is waiting for you to take the initiative. You should at least tell her that you love her,” Nisha said.

Now, there was no response from Vijay. He was thinking that Nisha didn’t realize he was talking about her. What would she think if she found out he had feelings for her? She might see him only as a friend, and if she knew about his feelings, she might start to avoid him. A flood of negative thoughts clouded his mind, the fear of losing Nisha as a friend overwhelming him.

“Vijay, what’s stopping you from expressing your feelings? Just tell me who she is. I’ll talk to her and let her know she’s one of the luckiest people to have you as a life partner,” Nisha said, her curiosity getting the better of her. She was trying to coax him into revealing her identity, but Vijay was still hesitant, holding back what he had kept inside for so long.

“Nisha, it’s not fear of rejection, but the fear of losing her as a friend. She’s my friend, and if I tell her how I feel, I might lose that friendship. Sometimes, when feelings shift from friendship to love, the dynamic changes, and the friendship might not remain the same,”

Vijay said, trying his best not to reveal that she was the girl he loved.

On the other side, Nisha was eager to know more. She was trying to encourage him, saying, “Vijay, I know you well, and I’ll give you the right advice. You should propose to her.”

“Oh, Nisha, I will do that. And I promise you, I will tell you about her once I’ve proposed,” Vijay said, feeling more determined to propose Nisha but still taking his time.

“Vijay, I am sure that the girl will accept your proposal, and I’m happy that you’ve found your love partner. But you should have told me earlier, as I am your friend,” Nisha said.

Nisha had many questions running through her mind. First, Vijay is in love. Second, he has not yet confessed his love to her. Third, she is his friend. And finally, he is going to propose to that girl.

Now, Nisha was wondering who that girl could be. She felt good for Vijay, but somewhere inside her, she wasn’t ready to see any other girl as his life partner. She was beginning to feel jealous. She wasn’t sure if these feelings were love, but seeing Vijay with someone else was unacceptable to her. She considered herself his best friend and believed it was her right to be the first person he shared everything with—his loneliness, happiness,

and life events. She didn't want to be a secondary person in Vijay's life, sharing him with someone else.

"Nisha, you are my best friend. I've never hidden anything from you, and I share everything with you. I didn't tell you about this because it was one-sided, and you're the first person who will know whom I love the most in my life. You'll see how much I love her and think about my life with her. My life will be complete if she accepts my love," Vijay said, indirectly expressing the feelings he had kept inside.

"So when are you proposing to her?" Nisha asked with a smile on her face. Hearing that Vijay loved someone so much and still hadn't proposed, Nisha momentarily imagined herself as the girl Vijay was going to propose to. But the next moment, she realized she liked Vijay very much, but only as a friend.

"Nisha, I am a devotee of Lord Krishna, and I have decided that on his birthday—Janmashtami, which falls next week—I will propose to her. With the grace of God, I am about to make one of the most important decisions of my life, and I am ready to accept whatever the outcome may be," Vijay said.

"I pray to God that your wish comes true on that day. My best wishes are with you. You will find the love of your life that day," Nisha said confidently.

“Thanks, Nisha, for your wishes. It’s only because of you that my wishes can come true,” Vijay replied.

“Always with you,” Nisha said.

After the call, both Vijay and Nisha were deep in thought. Vijay was contemplating how his feelings would be expressed and how the proposal would happen. It wasn’t coming to his mind. He had chosen Janmashtami for the proposal because of his great faith in Lord Krishna. With Krishna’s blessing, he was hopeful that Nisha would accept him as her life partner.

Nisha was thinking that Vijay was happy, and she was happy to know that he was in love. Nisha had never been in a relationship and had never allowed her feelings to get attached to anyone. Even though she was not having any crushes, she never paid much attention to anyone seeking a love affair with her. She was now 25 years old, but the magic of love and Cupid’s arrow had not touched her.

In recent months, her feelings toward Vijay had started to change. She cared for him deeply, and a feeling of jealousy arose whenever Vijay mentioned any girl, even though she considered herself just a friend. She wanted to be the most important person in his life, but she kept all her feelings, emotions, and behaviors under the shadow of friendship. She hadn’t yet realized what love truly felt like.

The day of Vijay's proposal was approaching, as he had promised. Nisha was more curious than Vijay himself. She kept counting the days. During this time, they had several conversations, but there was no mention of the upcoming proposal.

Finally, the day arrived. Vijay woke up early in the morning, as he was in his hometown for the festival. He went with his family to the Krishna temple. At the temple, he did not pray to make the day memorable or to ask for success in his proposal. Instead, he offered a simple prayer, trusting that whatever happens is as per God's will and that the outcome will be decided by Him. After the prayer, he sat outside the temple, feeling calm and at peace, chanting the name of God.

Meanwhile, Nisha was waiting for Vijay's call. She was eager to know what had happened. Growing impatient, she kept checking her phone. Her mind was completely occupied with thoughts of the proposal. When her patience ran out, she picked up her phone and called Vijay.

"Hello, Nisha! How are you?" Vijay asked, still sitting outside the temple. Since it was a video call, Nisha could see the temple in the background behind him.

"I'm good, Vijay. How are you? So, you're at the temple for prayer," Nisha replied. She wanted to know

the outcome but didn't want to ask directly first; she preferred Vijay to tell her.

"Yes, Nisha. I am with my family. We've come here to pray. And, since today is Janmashtami, I wish you and your family a very happy Janmashtami," Vijay said.

They had a long conversation, but Vijay didn't mention anything about the proposal. Nisha was just waiting for him to share what had happened. Sensing that Vijay wasn't going to tell her, she decided to ask directly.

"Vijay, what happened? Did you propose to that girl?" Nisha asked.

"Not yet, Nisha," Vijay replied.

"But you said you would propose to her today. What happened? Why didn't you?" Nisha pressed.

"Just some fear, that's all. I was thinking of proposing her, but I didn't have the strength," Vijay answered.

"Vijay, don't worry. Do what your heart says," Nisha encouraged him. Hearing this, Vijay felt more confident.

"Okay, Nisha. I'm going to propose to her," Vijay said, taking a deep breath. Nisha was eager to hear the answer today.

There was a brief silence.

“Yes, Vijay,” Nisha prompted.

“Nisha... I love you. You are the girl I love the most. You are the person I want to spend my whole life with. You are the answer to every prayer I’ve ever made. Nisha, I love you... I love you, Nisha,” Vijay said from his heart, words he had carried with him for almost two years. He followed what his soul was urging him to do. He expressed his feelings to the person he loved most. He did what he wanted—he shared his love.

At that moment, a bell rang out from the temple. Nisha could hear the sound clearly. Since it was a video call, she could also see Vijay’s expression. He looked like the kindest person she had ever known. Love was reflected on his face, and when he proposed, it seemed that each word came directly from his soul.

For a moment, there was no reaction from Nisha. She was on cloud nine, knowing that she was the person Vijay considered his life. All clouds of doubt and uncertainty had cleared. She now had no doubt that Vijay loved her the most.

But other thoughts began to surface in her mind. She was thinking that her goal was to study and then settle down here. She knew Vijay was a very kind person, but for him to set aside her dreams was not promising. Her studies were about to be completed soon,

and she would soon receive her graduation degree. She had already secured a campus placement and was going to join a company in the USA. Now, Nisha wondered what she should say to Vijay. She was aware that Vijay was a man with self-respect and integrity. If he was saying he loved her, it meant he loved her more than anyone else and was committed to his words.

Her heart was ready to accept the proposal, but her mind was diverging. She was weighing the pros and cons, and her focus was more on the cons. Vijay would never come to the USA for a job; he was very attached to his roots. Neither money nor an attractive lifestyle in the USA could change his mind. Nisha, who had almost completed her degree and was about to start her job here, wanted to settle down locally. Her priorities were changing, and settling here had become more important than love. She didn't want to put her dreams on hold for love.

"Vijay," Nisha said softly, looking into his eyes. "I know you are a very kind person, or I can say the sweetest person I've ever known. I consider you a very close friend, and I can never deny what you've done for me or the importance you hold in my life. But I haven't thought this through. I like you as a friend, but I haven't considered settling down with you. My dream was to study here and then settle down. I want to fulfill my parents' dreams, who have done everything for me. I

know you can't settle here, and I can't settle there. I wish you find a life partner better than me, someone who will keep you happy. But I'm sorry, Vijay—I can't move forward with this.”

Nisha was aware that what she had just said was very premature. She could have delayed telling him or asked for some time to think. But, for some reason, she spoke these words to Vijay. Now she felt bad for him. She realized that things might change, and she would need to create some distance to prevent him from getting hurt more.

“Nisha, there's no need to apologize,” Vijay replied softly. “Everyone has the right to make their own decisions. I'm happy that you've listened to your heart. Nothing is wrong in that. My love for you is from my heart, and I would never force you or make you feel guilty if you don't accept my proposal. I had feelings for you, and those feelings will remain forever. They won't change or fade because of your decision. I respect your choice to live your life as you wish and to fulfill your dreams. My best wishes are always with you.”

Tears welled up in Vijay's eyes, but he fought to keep them from falling. He tried to put on a brave face, but Nisha could see through the facade. She could tell he was heartbroken. He was an emotional person, and once he committed to something, he stuck to it. She thought it was best not to prolong this conversation, as

both of them were overwhelmed by their emotions—Vijay by the rejection of his proposal, and Nisha by her own priorities.

They said their goodbyes. After the call ended, Vijay remained sitting in the same place, his hand on his face. Tears escaped his eyes, and he let them flow freely. There was no anger or bitterness in his heart—just acceptance. His priority had always been Nisha's happiness. If she had accepted his proposal with pity or without genuine happiness, it would have been worse for him. Listening to his heart, Nisha had made her decision, but Vijay's heart was still echoing her words. He missed her terribly; if she were here, he would have hugged her tightly and cried until his heart was satisfied.

On the other side, Nisha sat on a chair, still holding her phone. She felt responsible for Vijay's heartbreak. She was the one who provoked him to propose, simply because she wanted to hear her name. She wanted to be the girl Vijay considered most important. When Vijay mentioned her, her priorities shifted. It was as if she had been craving Vijay's attention, and once she gained it, her focus changed. She wasn't looking at what she already had, but at what was about to come into her life.

For the next few days, there was no communication between them. Vijay hesitated to call, and Nisha refrained from initiating contact, giving Vijay time to reconcile. Both cared for each other deeply and were

trying not to hurt the other person. After some time, their conversations resumed, but now they were brief and mostly formal. They inquired about each other's professional lives and asked about family well-being. The warmth of sharing happiness and joyful moments seemed to have vanished from their interactions. Vijay was trying to behave like just a friend, returning to his usual manner, but somewhere, the genuine sincerity was missing. On the other hand, Nisha wanted to avoid hurting Vijay further, so she maintained distance. She didn't explicitly say anything, but Vijay could sense that she might accept his proposal someday. The beautiful bond they once shared was no longer as close as it used to be.

After completing college and attending her convocation, Nisha called Vijay, who congratulated her on her success. She then joined her new job, which kept her increasingly busy. Day by day, she started ignoring Vijay's calls, and she stopped calling him back. This behavior was very painful for Vijay, but he said nothing.

One day, when Nisha answered Vijay's call, he asked, "Why aren't you picking up my calls or even calling back? Are you okay?"

"Yes, I'm fine, Vijay. I want to tell you something. Please don't expect calls from me anymore, and don't call me either, because I can't talk to you every day. I'm sorry—no, I'm not sorry. I just am like this. I can talk to

you once a week—or no, maybe once a month or once in two months. If you call me once a month or once in two months, I will answer and talk to you, but please don't expect me to call you," Nisha said.

It was the hardest thing for her to say, but she believed it was necessary. This was her way of creating distance, allowing Vijay to think of someone else. She cried silently, knowing she had spoken these words to Vijay—someone who was always ready to do anything for her and loved her unconditionally.

After hearing her words, Vijay was speechless. He couldn't say anything. Ultimately, it was Nisha's wish, and he would respect her decision. Vijay had always done things to make Nisha happy, and now, she was asking him to stay away from her life. He would do his best to honor her wishes. For Vijay, Nisha was his soul; leaving her was like losing his very essence—like a lifeless body without feelings or emotions. But for her happiness, Vijay accepted her decision.

"Okay, Nisha. I won't ask why, but if you don't want my calls or to talk to me, I'll respect that. Take care of yourself, and be happy," Vijay said softly as he ended the call.

"Take care, Vijay," Nisha replied, and the line went dead. Neither of them made any further calls. There was no further communication or message

exchanged. Vijay decided to stick to his promise of not calling her. Despite countless moments when he wanted to dial her number, he held back at the last second. He always waited for Nisha to call him first. Not a day passed when he didn't miss her terribly and longed for her call. His love for Nisha remained as strong as ever. She was his first and last love. He often prayed to God to bring her back, but each time, he faced disappointment. Sometimes, he even thought about breaking his promise not to call, but somehow, he managed to restrain himself.

Life continued as usual for Vijay. Every day, he waited for Nisha's call, hoping that tomorrow might bring her voice. He imagined that when she finally called, he might be a little angry at her for asking him not to call, only to forgive her soon after. But all these thoughts remained just that—imagination. No call ever came from Nisha.

A year passed. Vijay missed her more than ever, but he kept in touch with her family and occasionally asked about their well-being. Whenever his mother asked about marriage, he avoided the question, saying, "Mom, I'll let you know when the time is right." Over the year, he nearly finished his diary, leaving some pages blank, waiting for his destiny to decide his future. He was just waiting and hoping.

Meanwhile, Nisha was busy with her career. Initially, it was tough, but she soon managed everything on her own. She often thought about Vijay and convinced herself that, sooner or later, everything would be fine. She still felt guilty for hurting Vijay but believed it was necessary to protect him from more pain. Unbeknownst to her, she was hurting him even more by keeping her distance. To save Vijay from pain, she was hurting herself. No one in her circle matched the trust and comfort she once had with Vijay.

Through her hard work and dedication, she was promoted ahead of schedule—a moment of happiness for her. In her excitement, she picked up her phone to dial Vijay's number, but at the last moment, her hand stopped. She missed Vijay too, but now she didn't want to rekindle hope or give him false hope by initiating the conversation.

It had been a year since Nisha started her job. She missed her family and home very much. To bring them closer, she sponsored their travel to the US so they could visit her. Her parents were overjoyed—they felt proud that their daughter was doing so well, and it was a wonderful opportunity for them to see the USA.

Nisha went to the airport in her car to pick up her parents. When she saw them, she hugged them tightly, as it had been three years since they last met. Tears welled up in everyone's eyes—Nisha's tears were of

happiness, and her parents' tears reflected pride and joy. Tears are the language of various emotions: they come out when we are very happy, hurt, sad, or in pain even when we smile. Though tears are the same, the situations are different, and they express different feelings.

Nisha was very happy to spend time with her family. On the way to her home, she spoke little—usually, she was quite talkative with her parents, but today she was subdued.

Over the next few days, she enjoyed wonderful moments with her parents. She took them to nearby places and even took leave from work to spend quality family time. She began to understand the true meaning of family. They talked about Mathura, their health, and how they were feeling in the US. She cooked for them herself, and in the evenings, they had long discussions. Her parents were happy to see her after such a long time, and Nisha was living each moment fully, trying not to miss any of it. She introduced her friends to her parents, and everyone shared a good time.

Fifteen days passed quickly, and soon the day of her parents' departure arrived.

One day, while her mother was applying hair oil, Nisha sat feeling relaxed and calm.

"Beta," her mother said softly, "since I came here, I've seen you very happy, engaged with us, and having a

good time. But it seems you're missing something. We've observed that behind your happiness and cheerfulness, there's a feeling of loss. It's like you're hiding something, and I think there's a problem—maybe at work or somewhere else. Please tell me, what's bothering you?"

"Nobody, there's nothing like that," Nisha replied. "I'm very happy that you and Papa came here, and I'm enjoying every moment with you. You won't believe, but these 15 days have been the most beautiful, the best days of my life. Nothing compares to the days I spent with you both. It's only because you're about to leave that I feel a little nervous. Otherwise, everything is fine," she added, trying to hide her true feelings.

Nisha knew her mother could see through her. She was the only person in her life she shared everything with—the happiness and the problems. Since moving to the US, their conversations had become less frequent, and now Nisha was carrying her emotional burden alone.

"Beta," her mother said gently, "I understand that we'll soon go back to India, and naturally, thinking about leaving you makes us nervous. But I've noticed something since we arrived. You're not very good at hiding your emotions, and if that's the case, why are you hiding from me? I know you very well. Tell me, what is

bothering you so much? Despite all your achievements, why do you feel this emptiness inside?”

Nisha was speechless. There was no way to hide her feelings anymore. She hugged her mother tightly, and her mother comforted her.

“Mummy, Vijay likes me, and he proposed to me. But I declined his proposal and asked him not to contact me. I know I hurt him, and when I told him to stay away, he kept his word. It’s been about a year now since he last called me, and I haven’t called him either,” Nisha confessed.

Her mother knew about the bond between Nisha and Vijay. She liked Vijay herself and had hoped they would be together, but she hadn’t wanted to push Nisha. She was waiting for Nisha to express her feelings. Now, the situation had changed.

“Beta,” her mother said softly, “if you liked him, then why didn’t you accept his proposal? And if you didn’t see him as a life partner, then why are you worried? Most importantly, why did you stop talking to him? If you had continued the conversation, things might have been different. You could have asked for more time to decide, which might have saved both of you from pain. You made a quick decision and told him not to contact you, thinking it would protect him from further hurt. But

in reality, you hurt him even more, and in doing so, you also hurt yourself. Now tell me—do you love him?”

Nisha was silent, and her silence was the answer. Her heart admitted that she loved Vijay—the feelings she had for him were the strongest emotion: love. Despite her mind’s denial, her heart loudly proclaimed her love for him.

“See, Nisha, I understood,” her mother said gently. “If you love him, then why did you say no? Was it just confusion at the time? Did you choose your dreams over him?”

Nisha hesitated before answering. “Mummy, I was a little confused then. It was a choice between him and my dreams, and I chose my dreams.”

“So, now you’re living your dream life here, having a successful career, but why do you still feel emptiness in your heart? Why aren’t you as happy as you used to be?” her mother asked softly.

“I don’t know, Mummy. What should I do? I have everything I dreamed of, but despite all this, I am not truly happy. The emptiness in my heart remains unfulfilled. I don’t want to leave this life, but I also want Vijay back in my life,” Nisha said, sobbing.

“Beta, life isn’t just about achievements. It’s also about family, happiness, joy, and a sense of fulfillment. You have all the comforts here and a very successful life,

but just a little while ago, you said that those 15 days with us were the most beautiful days of your last three years. Nothing else compares to that,” her mother replied softly. “If you find happiness in small things—family, friends, and love—then there’s nothing wrong with that. After all, we all want a happy and peaceful life. If being with Vijay makes you happy, then why not consider living in India? There are many good job opportunities there too. Sooner or later, you’ll have to choose between two paths. I suggest you listen to your soul and decide accordingly. Take your time. But one thing is certain—Vijay is a good person. What’s better than finding a life partner who is also your best friend? Both of you understand each other well, and what more do you want in a relationship? I didn’t know there was no contact between you two, but still, he reached out to us and inquired about our well-being.”

Her mother paused, then continued gently. “Nisha, you are a self-made person. Vijay would love to see you grow even more. He would be a good partner, someone who will stand by you when you’re right. I don’t know, but talking to you makes me feel that your absence in his life is making him miss you. You’ll regret it if you don’t consider him as your life partner. He loves you very much, and it’s a blessing to find such a person. The decision is yours,” her mother finished.

“Beta, for us, your happiness is more important than your status—whether you’re in the USA or in India, living a luxurious life or not. If you’re happy with Vijay in India, we would be very happy,” her mother concluded.

Nisha was lost in thought, contemplating every aspect of what her mother had said. She believed she would come to a final decision soon.

“Beta, one thing is clear—he’s not engaged. If he were, he would have told me, or I would have known about this from his family. As far as I know, he isn’t engaged, and I believe he’s waiting for you. What more time do you need to decide? Just take your decision and tell him. If you say yes, I’m sure he can wait a little longer. But whatever your decision is, make it soon—otherwise, you might live with regret,” her mother advised gently.

Nisha hugged her mother tightly, praying silently for the wisdom to make the right decision for her life.

In the following days, Nisha kept thinking about Vijay. She wondered how she could start a conversation with him. Her parents had returned to India, but the time spent with them had made her cheerful and happy. Discussing her life with her mother had lifted a heavy burden of regret and negativity from her heart. She felt lighter, breathing in positive energy. She thought,

“Maybe my mother should have come earlier, so I could have felt this happiness sooner. But better late than never.”

She was considering initiating the conversation but decided she wouldn't reveal her feelings immediately. Instead, she would wait for some time to speak to him. She hoped Vijay would contact her first, but she was also aware that might not happen. Finally, she decided to take the initiative and send him a message.

It was New Year's, and what better way to start fresh than with new hope and plans? She wrote a “Happy New Year” message to Vijay and sent it. Now she wondered—would Vijay read it and respond, or would he ignore it? But she had made the first move.

It had been a year since Vijay last called her. After reading her message, he thanked God that at least she had taken some initiative. He knew he shouldn't show anger or ego that might jeopardize her effort. He was aware that Nisha was a kind person with a pure heart, and he couldn't have found a better life partner. But she hadn't been able to decide at that moment, and in her hurry, she chose to part ways. Still, as they say, time is the greatest teacher and healer. Over the past year, Nisha might have realized that she needed to listen to her heart. Vijay was sure she had gone through her share of pain, and even if he tried to explain, she wouldn't have

understood then. Only time could reveal what she truly needed to do.

Vijay typed the message and sent it to Nisha. As she read his reply, a smile spread across her face—what better way to start the year? From then on, their messages began to flow. Every time, Nisha would send the first message, and Vijay would reply without delay. Vijay was waiting for her call, confident it would happen soon. He didn't want to force her, but he was eager for her to take the initiative—it would confirm her feelings and her commitment. If she expressed her feelings without him having to ask, it would mean she was truly in love and ready for a lifelong relationship.

Day by day, Nisha grew more attached to Vijay. Then one day, she finally called him.

“Hello, Vijay. How are you?” Nisha asked softly.

She waited a moment, hoping he would respond emotionally.

“Hi, Nisha. I'm good. How are you?” Vijay replied.

“I'm doing well, Vijay. How is your job? And how is your family?” Nisha asked.

“Job is good, and everyone is fine at home,” Vijay said.

A long conversation ensued, with both of them sharing about their current lives, jobs, families, travel plans, and more. It felt like they were going to finish their conversation that very day. Interestingly, neither of them discussed their last phone call. They chose to live in the present. Vijay didn't express any anger or resentment toward Nisha for ending their friendship abruptly; he wanted to give her time. He knew both of them were hurt, and this moment was not the right time to talk about the past. Their talk lasted two hours, and it was like two old friends reconnecting. All feelings of regret, anger, nervousness, and pain vanished, replaced by hope, happiness, and understanding.

Since that day, seven months had passed, but neither of them brought up their love life. Neither Nisha nor Vijay had expressed love openly, yet both were very happy to have found each other. Their lives had changed, and that change was visible on their faces. Love, after all, has the power to bring happiness and cheerfulness, and Vijay and Nisha embodied that.

Now, Nisha was finalizing her decision, trusting that God would guide her in making the right choice.

"Vijay, you know I'll be visiting India soon," Nisha said with excitement, as she was going after a long time.

“Wow, Nisha! That’s great news. Tell me when you’re coming—I’ll be there to meet you at the airport,” Vijay replied eagerly.

“No, Vijay. You don’t need to come to the airport. My uncle and father will be there to receive me. You know Janmashtami is coming soon after my arrival, and I want to meet you at the same place where you went there two years ago. I’ll reach there at 5 a.m. and wait for you,” Nisha said.

“Okay, Nisha. As you wish, I’ll be there,” Vijay responded. He didn’t ask why she didn’t want to meet at the airport or why she wanted to meet at the temple early in the morning, but for her happiness, he nodded in agreement.

“Alright, Vijay. Let’s meet there,” Nisha said.

“Okay, Nisha. As you wish,” Vijay replied.

That night, neither of them slept. Both spent their time thinking about their upcoming meeting. Vijay was overjoyed at the prospect of seeing Nisha after so long, while Nisha was determined to follow her heart.

Vijay waited outside the temple as instructed by Nisha. He had been waiting for this moment for the past four years, but these fifteen minutes felt much longer.

“Vijay,” he turned around—and there she was, in front of him. He wondered, was this real or just a

hallucination? But no—she was truly there. He felt incredibly fortunate.

Nisha approached him and hugged him tightly. In that moment, she forgot everything—the pain of separation, the countless sleepless nights, the tears shed remembering him, her job, responsibilities, and struggles. A wave of love washed over her. She felt as if she was in a world where only love mattered, not money, power, or status. This moment became her solace, a memory she would cherish forever. Even today, she smiled when recalling it. The trees swayed in the wind, the melodious chirping of birds filled the air, creating a magical atmosphere.

“Vijay,” Nisha whispered.

“Yes, Nisha,” Vijay replied, overwhelmed with emotion.

“I love you,” she finally said. Those words had been on her heart, and today she decided to speak them. She chose this place—the very same spot and day when Vijay had proposed to her two years ago—to express her feelings. There was no other place as meaningful as this for her.

“I love you, Nisha,” Vijay responded, pulling her into a hug again. “Every day I learn to love you more,” he thought silently. This was the most beautiful moment

of his life, one he had waited for long—with hope and patience.

The first thing Vijay noticed was her eyes—her beautiful eyes. But more than their beauty, they revealed everything—her pain, dreams, joy, struggles, and love. At that moment, words were unnecessary; her eyes spoke volumes. Love, after all, begins with the eyes, and in his case, her eyes had become the hero of his love story. Neither of them spoke further; they simply looked at each other, not wanting to miss even a second of this precious moment. Their eyes played the main characters, and their hearts supported them in silent harmony. The place became a paradise—Shangri-La—and nature itself seemed to witness their love, with the trees swaying gently and birds singing melodiously.

They walked along a calm road, Vijay holding her hand. Nisha began to speak, though she had spoken so much on the phone before, now words seemed difficult to find. It felt strange to her.

“You look beautiful,” Vijay finally managed to say, and Nisha silently thanked God for his words.

Soon, a crowd began gathering at the temple, and a queue formed. Vijay bought some Prasad as they waited for their turn to enter.

Now both of them were in the queue. This time, neither of them was in a hurry to enter the temple. The wait was comfortable, and they enjoyed the moment.

Vijay was happy that Nisha was with him, right beside him. She had chosen this place, and Vijay was proud of her decision. After all, it was Lord Krishna who had made this possible. Vijay kept gazing at Nisha; she looked stunning. They walked slowly, Vijay holding a thali of Prasad in one hand and her hand in the other. This moment was beyond words—only Nisha and Vijay could truly understand the depth of their feelings.

“Sometimes I think I’m dreaming—you being here with me. Is this real or just a dream? And if it’s a dream, I don’t want to wake up. I just want to be with you forever, Nisha,” Vijay whispered.

“Yeah, it felt like a dream that we would meet again, but now it’s real. We are here, in this sacred place, receiving God’s blessings,” Nisha replied.

They reached the idol of Krishna and Radha. They prayed for their happy life, and all the pain in their hearts seemed to vanish. A wave of love swept over them. They felt immense happiness witnessing this moment on such an auspicious day. The journey they were about to begin had its foundation here. Both missed each other deeply and sought divine blessings before starting their new chapter. They believed everything had happened by

God's grace, and today, God Himself was a witness to their reunion.

On their way back from the temple, they strolled through a park. The crowd was increasing as more devotees arrived. Many thoughts raced through their minds, but both chose silence over words. They walked slowly, holding each other's hands.

They spent time together until it was around 12:30 p.m.

"Should we go to the same coffee shop?" Nisha asked.

"Yes, we should. That's where the foundation of our bond was laid. It's very special to me. And you know, when you were in the US, I came here alone sometimes and sat at the same place where we first sat together. I missed you so much, Nisha," Vijay said.

With a smile, Nisha rested her head on Vijay's shoulder and said, "Same here."

Finally, they reached the coffee shop. The crowd was sparse, so they found the same seat where they had sat last time. Vijay asked Nisha to order something, and she simply smiled. Vijay understood and ordered the same as before. Nisha was recreating the scene from four years ago. She was wearing the same dress she had worn then and the same watch Vijay had gifted her. To her surprise, Vijay was also wearing the same outfit. She had

planned everything meticulously—she wanted to recreate that special moment. She knew Vijay was the kind of person who understood her likes and what made her happy.

A little time passed as the waiter took their order, and they were left alone in the café. It was around 2 p.m.

“Vijay,” Nisha began, about to ask something.

“Yes, Nisha,” Vijay replied attentively.

“Will you marry me?” Nisha asked. Vijay felt that this moment was the perfect time for her to express her feelings.

Vijay stood up, approached her, and looked into her eyes. He gently held her face in his hands and kissed her forehead.

“Do you still need an answer?” Vijay asked softly.

Nisha’s face lit up with joy—there was no better way she could have imagined to hear his response. She also stood, hugged Vijay tightly, feeling like she was on cloud nine. The happiness she experienced at that moment was beyond words; it felt as if she had obtained everything she ever wished for. Nothing in her life was more precious than this day. Her lifelong happiness and today’s joy outweighed everything else.

Both of them shared the wonderful news with their families, and the environment at home was filled with

happiness. That night, they had a long, joyful conversation over the phone. Vijay asked Nisha to meet him at the same coffee shop the next day, as he wanted to see her again. Nisha eagerly agreed.

That night, Vijay poured out every detail of the day into his diary—writing the most memorable day of their lives. He filled the last page with a heartfelt line:

“Coffee @ 2 p.m.—the moment when Nisha asked me to become her life partner, and my life’s wish was fulfilled.”

The next day, Vijay met Nisha again. They shared that their families were happy upon hearing the news. Nisha was so overjoyed she was practically jumping with happiness while sharing the good news.

“Nisha, what about your career in the US?” Vijay asked, aware of how hard she had worked to achieve her dreams.

“Vijay, I will now live my dream with you in India. I’ve realized what I was missing there. Unknowingly, I lost you once, but now I don’t want to lose my true love again,” Nisha said.

Vijay remained silent, realizing that his waiting had been worth it. He gently took Nisha’s hand and said, “I will always be with you, Nisha. In every moment, in every situation, I will never leave you.”

“Me too,” Nisha replied softly.

Vijay then took out his diary and handed it to Nisha.

“Nisha, this is the same diary you gave me. I have written about you—my feelings for you, my dreams with you, my imagination of the day you would say ‘I love you,’ our conversations, our best moments, our fights, our joys, and our sorrows. I have written my entire life about you, for you,” Vijay said, a pride and happiness shining on his face.

Nisha quickly took the diary and began reading the first page, in which Vijay described how he first saw her at the wedding. Slowly, she turned the pages, and her face grew more radiant with each one. She was eager to read the last page. When she finally reached it, she thanked Vijay for the beautiful words he had used to express his love. She especially appreciated the last line:

“Coffee @ 2 p.m.

“Thank you so much, Vijay. I never imagined you could write so beautifully. I’m taking this diary with me and will return it to you later,” Nisha said.

“No need to return it. Now it’s ours. Keep it with you,” Vijay replied.

That night, Nisha read the diary again. Vijay had truly poured his soul into his words. He had documented

every moment of their journey—from the day he first saw her to just a day before she proposed—every conversation, every emotion, every memory. Tears welled up in her eyes as she read. How could one person love someone so deeply that they devoted their entire life to that love? His unwavering commitment and selfless love touched her profoundly.

The most painful part she read was when she asked him not to call, and there was no communication between them. Vijay missed her terribly—his words reflected his longing. He had nights without sleep, missing her so much that she could feel his pain through his writing. Yet, with hope and faith, he patiently waited for her return.

As she read, some lines moved her to tears. She felt herself the luckiest girl in the world—a partner who loved her so much and was so committed that even if she had declined his proposal, he would have waited for her forever. Vijay's patience during their silence period, trusting in God's plan, was truly inspiring.

Late at night, around 3:30 a.m., she finished reading the diary. Early morning, at 5 a.m., she read the last page again and smiled. The most beautiful life—"Coffee @ 2 p.m."—had become a symbol of their love.

Nisha picked up her phone and called Vijay immediately. He answered without delay.

“Vijay, thank you so much for being my life partner. I can’t imagine my life without you. I love you so much,” Nisha said, overwhelmed with happiness.

“Nisha, my whole life is for you. I love you so much. But why are you awake so late?” Vijay asked.

“I was reading the diary. I just finished. I never imagined you could love me so much that you’d wait for me your whole life. I want to apologize from my heart for hurting you,” Nisha said sincerely.

“Nisha, you don’t need to apologize. Maybe this was the reason that brought you back here. Whatever happens, happens for the best. I’m just happy we are together,” Vijay replied.

“Vijay, a person with a big heart and great understanding can say such things only. If anyone else had been in your place, they might have been angry or impatient. But you handled everything so carefully. It is your love that touched my soul. I realized that in searching for gold, I was losing a diamond. Promise me you will never leave me alone,” Nisha pleaded.

“I will never leave you, Nisha. Never,” Vijay murmured, lying in his hospital bed. His voice was soft, full of love.

A nurse entered and gently told him to stay calm. “You’ll be fine. Don’t worry—you’ll meet your family soon.”

Vijay suddenly remembered he was in the hospital, receiving treatment for COVID-19. Memories flooded his mind—his wedding with Nisha, the birth of his son Abhay, and precious moments from his life. He knew he had to recover quickly, as he had promised Nisha he wouldn't leave her alone.

Final Chapter

Destiny

After learning that Tillu was COVID-19 positive, Pinku became deeply worried about his health. He made arrangements at home and took it upon himself to look after Tillu. Even though it was risky for Pinku, he was willing to do anything for Tillu, even risking his own life. He cared for him as if he were family. Pinku arranged all the necessary medicines and daily essentials in a separate room. No one else was allowed to meet Tillu, and Pinku ensured that he faced no problems.

Lying in bed, Tillu missed his parents, but he asked Pinku not to tell them about his condition. He was afraid they would panic, and he felt it was better to keep everything secret. Memories of his past life flooded his mind—his incidents, his choices, and his belief that he was the creator of his own destiny. He had chosen a life of crime, thinking everything would go according to his plans. But now, lying helplessly, he felt utterly powerless. The comfort of home and the caring of his

parents were missing, and the respect he once thought he earned through his reputation had no value in this moment.

There was no one with him except Pinku, and if Pinku hadn't been there, Tillu might have died alone. He never imagined that a criminal's life could lead to such helplessness. His condition worsened as he started experiencing breathing problems. Pinku managed to arrange an oxygen cylinder, but he knew that if Tillu's condition deteriorated further, he would have to admit him to the hospital. At home, treatment was not possible beyond a certain point.

Pinku was aware that getting Tillu admitted to a hospital was not easy. The shortage of beds due to the rising COVID cases, and the increasing demand, made it very difficult. Moreover, if Pinku attempted to get Tillu admitted, there was a risk that the police might catch him. Tillu had always despised being in police custody, and he didn't want to be behind bars.

Pinku was desperately trying to find a solution—one that would allow him to get Tillu admitted without risking his capture. He tried contacting his contacts, but nothing was working. The situation at hospitals was worsening daily; even large sums of money and high-level contacts couldn't secure a bed. Pinku was determined to save Tillu, willing to take any drastic step necessary.

As Tillu's condition continued to deteriorate, Pinku grew increasingly panicked. Finally, he devised a risky plan—one that had no other options left. He dialed a number and explained the situation. The plan was conveyed, and Pinku was confident that this was the only way to save Tillu's life.

He entered Tillu's room and saw him sleeping. Approaching his bedside, Pinku whispered, "Bhai, you're going to get well soon. I won't let you die like this. You've always lived like a king, and you will die like that too. You will rule this city. If I have to do something drastic to ensure your well-being, I won't hesitate. You were my hero, and I will always hold that respect in my heart." As he spoke, Pinku became emotional.

At that moment, Pinku received a call informing him that the arrangement was complete. He knew he had to be ready to get Tillu admitted immediately.

Tillu, lying quietly in bed, didn't hear everything Pinku said, but he had faith in him. Pinku was about to do something unexpected—something that could change everything.

Nisha was missing Vijay terribly; her life had changed completely. She spent her days praying to God for Vijay's recovery, feeling helpless and desperate. Seeing the rising number of COVID-19 cases and the deteriorating condition at the hospital made her uneasy.

Abhay would often ask her about Vijay, and she would simply say that Papa would come home soon.

For the last two days, Nisha had been overwhelmed with a strange, unknown fear. She couldn't understand its source, but it haunted her constantly. She waited anxiously for Vijay's call, but there were no calls from him—he was unable to reach out either.

One day, while walking on the balcony lost in thoughts about Vijay, her phone suddenly rang. She hurried to her room, hoping it was Vijay. But when she looked at the screen, she saw an unknown landline number from Delhi. She picked up the call.

“Hello,” Nisha spoke.

“Hello, I am calling from X Hospital. I need to confirm if you are Nisha speaking?” asked the caller.

“Yes, speaking,” Nisha replied, her heart pounding. The call was from the hospital where Vijay was being treated. This was the first contact in the last eight days, and her anxiety intensified.

“Ms. Nisha, it is with great sadness that I have to inform you that Mr. Vijay has passed away. Due to COVID-19, both his kidneys were damaged, and his body did not recover. His body is now in the mortuary and will be sent for cremation this evening. Because of the pandemic, the body will not be handed over to the family. You may come to the hospital for the cremation,

which will be carried out by the staff here. For safety reasons, it's better not to bring children," said the caller, then ended the call.

Nisha was left speechless. Darkness clouded her vision, and tears flooded her eyes. She could never have imagined that her life would be shattered in a single call. As her mother started to cry, Abhay ran to her and asked what was wrong. Without a word, Nisha hugged him tightly. She had lost the person she loved most in her life—the one she was fully devoted to, loved more than her own life. The bond of love had been broken by death, but she believed that love between souls was eternal, unbreakable even in death.

Nisha's condition worsened, but somehow, she managed to call Vijay's family and her own. A wave of grief swept through both families—their loss was irreparable. Life's harsh realities hit her hard; the thought of losing Vijay was unbearably painful. She had always feared losing him, and now she faced that brutal truth. Vijay had done everything for his family. Her mother fainted after hearing the news, her father broke down, and they arranged for an ambulance, as restrictions on private and public vehicles were still in place to reach Delhi. Vijay's friends, upon hearing the news, were shocked—this was a significant loss for them, as Vijay was a kind-hearted man always ready to help family and friends.

When they reached the hospital, they were not allowed to see Vijay's body, which was fully wrapped. Approaching the body was prohibited. The staff explained that Vijay's body lay among others, concealed from view, wrapped in a shroud.

Nisha broke down completely upon seeing his body. The moment was unbearably painful. No one had expected the devastation that COVID-19 would bring—families shattered, livelihoods lost, lives taken. The pandemic's impact was profound, affecting everyone physically and emotionally.

While lost in her grief, Nisha thought if only Vijay could have been saved—she would have given her own life to save him. He was a person of immense value, and his loss struck her like a jolt in her heart.

Among the crowd was another person—someone connected to Vijay's body—whose eyes were filled with tears. He couldn't approach or cry openly, but silently, tears streamed down his face as he watched Nisha and her family. He longed to come closer, to share something, but he remained rooted in place, a silent spectator.

The staff performed Vijay's cremation, and the final chapter of his life was closed. A life was lost, but hope and love endured.

In the next two to three months, the impact of the coronavirus began to lessen, and life gradually started returning to normal. The lockdown was lifted, and businesses and jobs resumed. However, people continued to follow safety protocols—wearing masks and maintaining social distancing—making these practices a part of everyday life.

Nisha decided not to move to her in-laws' house in Mathura or back to her own home in Mathura. She felt deeply connected to her house, which Vijay had bought, and it was filled with memories that evoked strong emotions. Every corner of the house reminded her of Vijay, and later, of Abhay. The house was a testament to the love and effort Vijay and she had put into it. Nisha decided to stay there, believing that living in his house would help her feel Vijay's love and care every moment.

Her in-laws and her mother tried hard to persuade her to move to their home in Mathura and even asked her to stay there for some months. But Nisha refused. She was determined not to live anywhere else. She missed Vijay terribly; it often felt as if she was still waiting for him. She knew that death was the ultimate truth of life, but a part of her heart refused to accept Vijay's separation from her.

In the evenings, she and Abhay would spend most of their time together, often reading Vijay's diary. This activity made her more emotional and brought tears to

her eyes. She had read the diary many times before, but the love expressed by Vijay was so profound that she found herself reading it over and over again.

Nisha had also made a painting of Vijay and his mother, which she had promised to give him. Vijay loved the painting so much that he framed it and hung it near a picture of Lord Krishna. Every time she saw that painting, it reminded her of Vijay's love and their bond.

Nisha felt the deep pain of being away from her loved one. She believed that Vijay had endured unbearable pain, and in her heart, she felt that she was being punished for a crime she never committed. The ache of separation and the weight of her grief seemed almost too much to bear.

There was news that Tillu had left India and was managing his criminal activities from abroad. In India, Pinku was handling the crime business. Over time, Pinku's behavior changed significantly; he started talking very little and often appeared like a lost soul. It seemed as though something was making him feel uneasy. His gang members asked him about this, but he remained silent.

Pinku's condition grew more difficult. He stopped speaking altogether and behaved differently than before. Although he was aware of why he was feeling this way and knew how he could rid himself of these feelings, he

was unable to decide. Something was holding him back from taking any further steps. He felt powerless and decided to do something that would set his soul free.

Pinku took his car and drove to an isolated place. He made sure no one was following him and that he was completely alone. Upon reaching the location, a person greeted him. Pinku replied with a nod and proceeded to a nearby building. Inside, he found a room with someone lying on the bed—someone in poor health. The individual had a long beard, indicating he hadn't shaved recently, and was clearly unwell.

Pinku approached the bed, his eyes filling with tears, and sat down on a chair beside him.

“Hello,” Pinku said softly.

The person opened his eyes and recognized Pinku—the visitor he used to see often. He gained some strength and asked, “What do you want?”

It was Vijay....

Pinku threatened the hospital's head doctor, insisting that Tillu be admitted to the hospital. When that was initially impossible, Pinku asked the doctor to replace someone else so Tillu could take their place. Since ICU facilities were needed for Tillu, and Vijay was also in the ICU, Pinku made Vijay a scapegoat. With utmost secrecy, Tillu was replaced with Vijay, and only the doctor and a select few knew the truth. The

doctor was instructed to ensure no one noticed the switch, and only he was to care for Tillu in the ICU.

Pinku then moved Vijay to a remote location with basic facilities, intending to keep him alive for a few days. His sole focus was on Tillu, and he was content that Tillu was hospitalized. Vijay, in his mind, was of no concern—once Tillu recovered, he would decide what to do with Vijay.

However, fate had other plans. Even under the supervision of the doctor, Tillu's condition worsened, and both his kidneys failed, leading to his death. For Pinku, this was the most devastating moment; he had lost his friend—or rather, his brother-and-friend. Pinku used to tell Tillu that he was a king and that they would die like kings, fulfilling their dreams. Tillu was everything to him, and his death struck Pinku like a bolt. He had promised his friend he would do anything to keep him alive like a king.

Pinku couldn't accept Tillu's death. He was so disturbed that he even contemplated ending his own life. But to honor his promise, he decided to hide the truth. He instructed the doctor to confirm that Vijay had died from coronavirus, and since no one was allowed to see the body, everyone would believe it. Pinku threatened the doctor, warning that if the truth was revealed, he would kill all his family members. Fearing for his life, the

doctor complied. Tillu's body was presented as Vijay's, meticulously made to look identical.

Meanwhile, at the hospital, as Nisha and Vijay's family mourned Vijay's death, Pinku watched from afar. Deep down, he wanted to reveal the truth to Nisha, but he did nothing. Instead, he spread rumors that Tillu had gone abroad and was managing his business from there. He even managed to plant evidence linking Tillu to recent crimes, resurrecting his name in the underworld as a powerful crime lord—reclaiming his reputation as a king and don.

But Pinku couldn't do anything for Vijay. Despite all medical efforts, Tillu was not saved, and Vijay, surprisingly, survived on minimal medication—a miracle in itself. Pinku initially wanted to kill Vijay so no one would ever know it was Tillu who had died, not Vijay, but somehow, something prevented him. Even in his dreams, Pinku saw a bright light, hinting that forces beyond his understanding were at work. His sleep was restless, and he began drinking heavily to cope.

That night, Pinku resolved to make a difficult decision that would free his soul. He sat down and finally revealed everything to Vijay.

"Vijay, I didn't want anything from you. I only wanted to end your life so I could keep this secret," Pinku confessed. He then recounted the entire story—

his friendship with Tillu, their entry into the crime world, their dreams, the pandemic, and Tillu's death.

He said, "I thought that after killing you, I could live peacefully, with Tillu's reputation intact—believing he'd die like a king, and this secret would stay with me forever. But do you know, Vijay, despite all my efforts, Tillu was not saved, and you were not eliminated. Something kept me from killing you. I couldn't sleep properly; my life turned into hell."

He paused and continued, "Everything in life is not in our control. Some things are written by destiny. Tillu's death in the hospital was his fate, and surviving the coronavirus was yours. Both of you lived according to your destinies. I tried to alter the system, but I forgot that it's beyond my reach."

Pinku then made a decision. "Today, I am setting you free. Live your life with your family. But I have one small request—please keep everything I've told you a secret. Just create any story about your return."

Having spoken his truth, Pinku released Vijay, feeling as though his soul was finally free. That night, he slept peacefully, free from alcohol. In his dreams, he saw Tillu smiling and giving a thumbs-up—a sign that Tillu's spirit approved. Pinku finally understood the meaning of that dream: Tillu's soul wished for Vijay's freedom.

Nisha was sitting alone, missing Vijay. Once, she and Vijay used to talk a lot about their daily routines, and Abhay would often join them. Playing with Abhay was their favorite activity, but now all of that was missing from her life.

“Papa! Papa!” Abhay’s voice called out from near the door. Nisha’s first thought was that she was hallucinating, but then she realized that Abhay was still saying those words. She ran quickly toward the gate, and for a moment, she couldn’t believe her eyes. Vijay was standing there. He looked weak, but it was Vijay. Nisha could never mistake him. She was about to faint, but Vijay held her and helped her stand. Nisha could feel the touch of Vijay—the same touch she remembered. She wondered if this was a dream or some divine miracle.

“I am alive, Nisha. Your love is with me, just as I promised—I will never leave you. I am here,” Vijay said, hugging her. Tears of happiness streamed down his face.

As Nisha regained her composure and was certain he was Vijay, she hugged him tightly, tears continuing to flow from her eyes.

“Where were you, Vijay? And the body that was shown as yours—what was that? Where have you been all this time? And why do you look so weak?” Nisha asked, firing all her questions at once.

“Nisha, give me some time,” Vijay said softly. He took her face, kissed her on the forehead, and added, “I love you, Nisha.”

“I love you, too, Vijay. I missed you so much,” Nisha replied, hugging him again.

“But tell me, what happened?” she asked once more.

“For that, you’ll have to read my next book. And one more thing—would you like to have coffee at the same place, at the same time—coffee at 2 p.m.?” Vijay said with a smile as he hugged Nisha and Abhay.

“Yes, it will be another most memorable moment,” Nisha said, smiling and looking at Vijay.

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