

The chapter begins:

THE REDEMPTION OF NIMBAURS

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A Glimpse of Characters

Vidushi Sharma- a young girl

Veda Sharma- Vidushi's twin sister

Madhav Sharma- Elder brother of Veda and Vidushi

Ishan Tripathi- Madhav's best friend

**Ishani Tripathi-Vidushi's best friend; Ishan's sister;
Veda's classmate**

Sanya- friend

**Mario- American boy; neighbour of Vidushi; Vidushi's
classmate**

Deepanshi mam- sports teacher

Nidhi mam- Science teacher

There are many other characters about whom you'll know soon, keep reading and enjoy the story.

Author's note

I am a student of Bhavan Panchkula where I learnt to weave my magical words. This book is not just a story, but the result of my hard work. I wrote my very first story at the age of 5 when I first dreamt of becoming an author, and as these 6 years flew by a blink, I developed my talent into my passion and now at the age of 11, I am an author. I always knew that I was intelligent and was destined to do something incredible soon, some of my teachers saw my talent, while, I felt some did not. I just used to watch my classmates getting the opportunities again and again and felt like I'm not being noticed when I realized I was wrong. It's fine to wait for good opportunities, but I realized that I shouldn't wait for opportunities, instead I should create one, and so on, I started to write a novel. People cringe when they're insulted or embarrassed, but I believe that every single thing is for a purpose. My journey also began with an insult. At a point, I stopped writing and forgot about my novel when I once boasted at school about myself writing a book. Someone insulted me by saying that I can never do this. I felt humiliated at the moment, but soon that insult gave me the guts to write again, what began with my attitude soon developed to be my passion. The biggest adventure we all can experience is living our dreams. If you've thought it, then make it an aim. The ability of a writer is to imagine that isn't familiar, getting out of the comfort and familiar zone and stepping into something which anyone can't

think of is the test of their power. Here are some inspiring author quotes which I really want to share-:

1. Start writing, no matter what. Water doesn't flow until the tap is turned on- Louis L'Amour
2. You may not write well every day but you can still edit a bad page, blank pages cannot be edited- Jodi Picoult Librum
3. A writer is a writer because even when there is no hope, even when nothing they do shows any sign of promise, they keep writing- Junot
4. A writer's life and work are not a gift to mankind; it is its necessity.

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1.

The call from mom's office

Veda and Vidushi were identical twins, except Vidushi had curly hair and Veda had straight hair, they were chubby but also had a sharp jawline, they were foodie but were very slim, they were very tall and had neck-length hair, they had grey eyes, and brown with slightly black coloured hair. Veda was a girly girl and loved to stay with girls more often, she liked things like, indoor games, fashion, etc. While Vidushi was completely different. She was a tomboyish girl and didn't care much about her looks. She loved sports a lot. Every evening, she used to go for her athletics practice. Madhav was also very tall, he had fair skin but because he spent too much time in sun, he had a lot of tanning which made him a little dull, Madhav looked really cool. They lost their dad at a very young age.

They were living a happy normal life with a golden retriever pup in Chandigarh. Veda, Vidushi and Madhav got a puppy but it was their responsibility to take care of that pup. When the family gathered for the discussion about the pup, 'I am saying it now, I'm not responsible for her' mom said being clear. 'Mom, but who'll take care of the pup when we're in school'. 'You have to train her to sit silently until you come back, I'm not taking her responsibility at all' replied mom. Madhav thought for some time and suggested that we can keep her name 'Sunny'. 'Bhaiya, we are discussing about taking care of

the pup and you're lost somewhere else' said Veda, 'What's the problem with you! I was just suggesting, if you don't have patience to listen what I say then get lost' Madhav yelled. That's how they both started argument. Veda said something to Madhav and pushed him, Madhav got angry and pulled her hair, they started fighting. There is nothing new when they fight and Vidushi comes in between and asks them to stop fighting. They forgot about the pup, then suddenly a BANG! was heard from the kitchen, everyone went there and saw, it was Sunny (name of the puppy) she was roaming here and there with a pan on her nose. Veda laughed and picked her up. They were training Sunny to sit quietly until they come from School along with many more fun trainings. Finally, Sunny was trained, she quietly enjoyed until they came, followed instructions as directed and a few more things, still a lot of training was left. Sunny was beloved, all of them enjoyed with Sunny.

Vidushi created a track of daily walk for Sunny. She needed a walk twice a day. After Sunny came, three of them became very responsible. Madhav took her to walk daily, even before school. They started waking up at 5:30, they took Sunny to walk, trained Sunny for many things and came back home for making Sunny take a bath, this all was finished till 6:45 when their own morning routine started. As they were in School and Mom was working at home, Sunny played with her own toys quietly, she learnt how to open and close the door. Whenever someone was outside, without seeing or hearing any sound she would sense their presence. She only barked when someone was outside or when she was told to, Mom wears headphones

while working, so she does not hear the sound of doorbell, so Sunny comes barking and notifies mom whether someone was outside, they didn't get many visitors on common days, so, mom knew it could be delivery or their kids, so mom responded 'yes,' or 'no'. Due to trainings of Sunny, she could understand it and opened the door, sometimes the delivery man asked for OTP. Mom could not leave her work in between so she wrote the OTP on a slip and gave it to Sunny, and Sunny gave it to the delivery man. Now, Delivery men, Plumbers, maids and neighbours also knew Sunny. Mario loved animals; he daily came to their house to meet her. Sunny was very friendly and made everyone her friend, she didn't know the difference between a friend and a stranger. Even at evening, Vidushi, Veda and Madhav kept care of Sunny from their hearts. After Vidushi's athletics class, they would take her to a walk.

It was a chill night. Madhav brought some woods for the fire place which was in living room. All were sitting there, Veda was drinking hot chocolate from her cup while Vidushi was pouring some for herself, every night, they used to watch a series Bluey. Sunny also joined them watching the series as it was especially for her. Bluey is a series that uses all the colours dogs can see, Sunny was very fond of Bluey, there was a funny barking sound in the series that she tried to create. They watched series until mother finished work and joined them. This part of the day was loved by Sunny. When they came back home after walking at 7:45, Sunny sat in front of the clock and waited that when will it struck to an hour. When it rang once and it was 8'o clock, she quickly came and sat on the

sofa and waited for someone to play Bluey. Madhav did this job, he always made sure that Sunny gets to watch Bluey for some time, slowly Veda and Vidushi made hot chocolate for themselves and came. When mom finished work, she joined them and they played a programme. This chill night was the silence before disaster. Veda and Vidushi were sipping their hot chocolate and Madhav was giggling after watching something funny in the programme, mom was in the kitchen distributing food in plates for them. Suddenly, her phone started ringing which was in living room. Vidushi picked it up for her, it was Mrs. Malhotra, mom's colleague.

Mom came trotting holding three plates at once and gave them, Sunny was sitting beside and having her food. Mom picked up the phone, 'Good evening, Mrs. Sharama I wanted to inform you that you have to join us for a meeting at our institute in Mumbai' said Mrs. Malhotra 'Sure, when?' 'This meeting will continue from 18th January to 30th January, I hope you will join, as you are an important part of our company' replied Mrs Malhotra. 'Okay, I'll book my tickets today' she said and cut the phone. She told her children about it. She was very concerned, many thoughts were popping up in her mind, she was scrolling on phone and searching for a flight and also thinking about her kids and Sunny. This all made her really stressed. They had dinner and went to bed. Sunny was an innocent puppy who was living happily with her owners. Whole night, Mom was booking tickets for her flight to Mumbai. Next day was Sunday, it was holiday for everyone. Sunny usually had a home spa on Sundays. Vidushi was cleaning Sunny's thick coat while Veda was

making her brush teeth. It was game for both of them, like they are playing with their dolls, first they would wash her body with soap and water, brush her teeth, then cut some of her hair, cut nails and lastly cleaned paws. Madhav was not interested in cleaning activities, so he stayed away.

He was reading a book of Germino Stilton which was a book series about a mouse named Germino, it talked about his adventures. Mom came with breakfast and handed Madhav, Veda and Vidushi were enjoying cleaning in the backyard. Mom called both of them 'Girls, it's time for breakfast come fast' Both of them washed their hands and came for the breakfast in kitchen, they joined Madhav and mom. Mom sighed and said 'I've to go to Mumbai for my meetings, I'll return after a week. I'm talking to Mario's mother so she can take care of you in my absence' After saying this, she called Mario's mom.

'Good morning, sorry to disturb you.' said Mom.

'Good morning, hope you're enjoying. You can speak to me anytime,' said Mario's mom.

'Actually, I had a meeting in Mumbai and I'll be returning after a week, can you take care of my kids?'

'Sure, it would be my pleasure to help you.'

'They'll stay at your home if you're fine with it.'

'Yeah, I love them, I would be happy to welcome them in our house,'

'How can I thank you! And will you be able to manage Sunny?'

‘I’m sorry but Mario’s father is allergic to dogs, and I don’t think that we can handle one.’

‘Okay, thanks! Bye, have a nice day.’

Mom was really worried about Sunny. ‘Mom, do you know there is a pet house ahead, it can take care of Sunny during our absence’ said Veda, ‘Yeah, Sanya has a cat, she leaves it there when they are out of town’ Mom was so relieved after listening this, she was not worried at all now. Next morning, they were packing their stuff, Madhav just kept 4 shirts and 3 jeans, uniform, a toothbrush and said he is done with all the packing for this week.

He packed few of Sunny’s stuff like her leash, her favourite treat and toys and her toothbrush in her bag as she was going to the pet hostel. Sunny was not at all happy to leave all of them, she was trying to hide into Veda’s bag so she’ll not leave them, she could be successful in her plan if Veda’s bag was not full. Mom told to pack only the important things, but Veda was packing 12 tops 6 shirts 8 pants, hair brush, hair clip, tooth brush, toothpaste, candies, stuff toys, lip gloss, necklaces, bracelets, uniform, extra clothes, books, toys, photos, pillows, bed sheets and rubber bands. Madhav surprisingly said ‘Are you packing to stay for a week or permanently shift there?’. Veda ignored and kept packing her bracelets and clothes. Finally, it was time to leave, mom kissed each of them on forehead and dropped at Mario’s house.

She took Sunny’s bag and went to the pet hostel for dropping Sunny. They arrived and got out of the car. She

was at the pet reception talking about Sunny to Miss Rastogi the worker of there. Miss Rastogi said 'Everything will be available to your dog; you just have to pay us Rs. 8500' Mom was shocked after hearing such an expensive stay she said 'Mam, that's not in my budget can you please give me a discount!' Miss Rastogi didn't agree and made mom pay. She quietly paid the amount told and went on.

2.

A few days at Mario's house

Mario was like when a puppy licks you on face, half cute and half disgusting, he was a garbage guts, he could eat anything and anytime, he was really a foodie but no one could know that how he remained slim. He was white with slightly red cheeks and dark blonde hair, he was a half heritage boy so he could speak many languages and follow many cultures and traditions, as his mom was an Indian, he could speak Hindi, Malayalam and Punjabi and as his dad was American, he could speak English, the most common language. He was very tall as much as he was supposed to be, even Veda and Vidushi were shorter than him, he was cute and handsome at the same time.

Now let's talk about what happened today. Ishani is a girl with tanned skin and long silky hair; she was short and had very smart looks. Her flick always hung near her forehead. Ishani was a very busy mind. She was frustrating, but also very intelligent. She was weird but had smart skills as if she were a detective. She was called DII (Detective Intelligence Investigation) by Madhav. Ishani was walking past a park in evening when she saw V2M's (Vidushi Veda Madhav) mother in car, worried. A boy was staring at the taxi continuously from which she went to the airport. Ishani was puzzled. In the park she saw a candy shop with no owner. The next day when it was lunch break, Ishani asked Veda, 'hey, where was your mother going tomorrow?' 'She went to Mumbai for

some of her work' Veda replied. 'So, are you three alone at home?' asked Ishani. 'Nope, we are living at Mario's until mom comes back' answered, 'Is it so? What about you dog, where is she?' Ishani asked again 'She is in a pet hostel' 'Mom dropped her yesterday; it is the front of the park where there is a candy shop' Veda. 'Who was that young boy behind her?' she questioned, 'I don't know any boy. Can you stop asking questions now! Why do you always get on my nerves!'. Ishani sat quietly, she was chewing gum and relating what Veda told and what she saw yesterday. School was over.

V2M went to Mario's. Madhav and Mario were best buddies. They would do every single thing together. Now, as they were staying there, Madhav and Mario would enjoy even more. They would do very strange experiments like mixing clay and water to see what happens. Today, they wanted to do a new experiment, they wanted to make a braid with human and dog hair, I know you would have a reaction like 'What?!' like Mario's mom had. When Veda was busy playing chess with Vidushi, Mario and Madhav quietly sneaked into the room and cut one inch hair of Vidushi's one of the plates, Vidushi now had ponytail shorter and the other on longer.

Both the mischievous friends went out of the house running. 'We're gonna die soon' 'How, by a car accident or any disease? Please don't say by terrors!' 'Ah! Your sister! She's gonna kill us when she'll come to know we cut her hair' yelled Mario. Suddenly, Madhav stopped in front of the park and said 'Mario, if we're going past here,

why don't we have some candies from the candy shop by the park' 'Of course, these candies are the best I've ever eaten, but we don't have any money' Madhav smiled and took out some notes of 100 from his pocket. They both sniggered and headed to the playground's candy shop.

The vendor of the shop was really friendly, her name was Diya and loved talking to customers, she was really frank with all. Mario greeted and asked 'Hello, can I have some buttercup candies?'. 'Ooh! And some gummy bears for me and chokey-chokey too please!' added Madhav. Diya smiled and said 'Welcome to Diya's candy shop! I know I keep repeating that, but my owner tells me so, here are your gummy bears and some butter cups for you'. Ishani and Ishan were walking past the park. 'Did you notice that?' Ishani 'Yeah I did, Mario and Madhav are there' replied Ishan 'No, the new show room behind the candy shop' added Ishani, 'Oh! That's show room is of Miss Khanna, Edmond's aunt, they shifted here a few days ago, Edmond must be there let's go and meet him' Ishan said this as he grabbed Ishani along with him.

'Oh, Hi Ishan! This is my aunt's shop, she sells scrunchies, shirts, make-up and other girls' stuff here' said Edmond as they both started talking. Edmond was a tall thin boy, he had fair white skin and red and chubby cheeks, he had black eyes and black hair. Ishani realized that he was the boy who was standing and staring at V2M 's mom's car the previous day, but she didn't bother asking. Ishani saw that Edmond was sweating, he had dirt in his hand and around his neck with a cleaning cloth in his pocket. Ishani was curious to know what's happening. 'Hey Edmond, I

thought you were hygienic, what's the dirt doing in your clothes, hands and neck?'. 'Uhm...it's just I was helping my aunt clean the showroom this morning, I haven't taken bath since that'. Ishani smiled at him and went wandering inside the showroom.

She looked at the edges of window which were quite clean. She smelled them, I know that sounds annoying when Ishani does that. She smelled the fresh colin that was used for cleaning around 15 mins ago. Ishani could clearly smell the colin along with Edmond's lie. Edmond had to run out for some work while Mario and Madhav saw both of them in shop. Ishani thought 'I better get out of here rather than wandering around with boys,'.

Meanwhile, Veda and Vidushi were missing Sunny very much, they were wondering that when mom will be back and they will meet their little fellow again. It was dinner time, Mario and Madhav were sitting at the dining table and playing with Pokémon cards. After Vidushi was done with athletics, she returned home. Vidushi simply loved sports (except basketball) she would not miss a single day of her class.

Veda and Vidushi were arguing on sleeping at the bed near window when Mario came and said 'Hey girls, just to be clear that bed is mine and mom is calling out for the dinner'. As Mario went out hopping. 'Nice! Now no more fights!' grumbled Vidushi in frustration.

They all gathered and sat near dining table, Veda was eating the salad, 'Phew! When will mom and sunny come back?' she said. 'You are asking like you have come for a forever stay at my house while zombies have captured

your mom and puppy Sunny' Mario said looking at Veda with his usual naughty and gleaming eyes. 'Don't talk rubbish Mario! Why do you have to connect everything with zombies,' shouted Vidushi. Veda was starting to yawn when Madhav added 'I wish we could go to the pet resort and meet Sunny'. 'They will be back in 6-7 days; you are making it forever' yelled Vidushi. 'What's wrong with her?' whispered Mario in Madhav's year 'I don't know but she can be scary when angry' muttered Madhav. Vidushi stormed off as she heard Mario and Madhav talking.

Nobody knew why but she was really angry. She went to their room, slammed the door and kicked the door multiple times. Mario's mom came in and politely asked her 'Vidushi, if something is wrong you can openly tell me' Vidushi said, 'No, it is just some school stuff, you wouldn't understand'. Mario's mother asked 'That's fine, I'm here to listen'. 'Just because I don't like the girly stuff and enjoy sports more, my classmates make fun of me calling me a boy' 'Ims not interested in fashionable things and gossips like Veda, and so I always cringe in front of my classmates'. Vidushi took a long breath as she paused for a while. 'So, what's wrong with that?' questioned Mario's mother. 'I just don't like being myself, if I do, I'll be insulted as usual'. Vidushi said all this trying to fake her emotions and just speak something which may or may not be true to not feel overwhelmed. She didn't even hold an eye contact but looked at her hands the whole time.

‘Woah! You kids really do have problems’ said Mario’s mom as she was shocked, ‘You cannot control what they are saying but you can manage yourself to not be distracted by what they say, you know that they’re joking and speaking rubbish, so why you’re wasting time in thinking that why did they insult you’ said Mario’s mom. Vidushi felt good after listening this, but she didn’t tell the real thing for why she was upset.

It was only her to get the phone, because mom thought that Vidushi was the most responsible child. She got her phone a day ago as her mother gave it to mobile technician for recharge, the recharge was done in two days, so mom asked Mario’s father to give her the mobile as his office was nearby the technician’s shop. Vidushi’s eyes were watering now, it was really common, first she got very angry like an active volcano or a huge fire in the amazon forest and then cried like a hummingbird. She didn’t wish to talk to anyone about how was she feeling.

Veda came in after the dinner and sat on the bed, she usually used to read a book before sleeping, but today she just quietly lied down on bed and slept.

Everyone was sleeping peacefully except Vidushi; she could not sleep with her overwhelming mind. She took Madhav’s laptop and quietly sat in her bed wearing the blanket. She was doing some typing, scrolling and reading, but then thought that someone would wake up so she went to the kitchen and sat on the floor continuing her work.

It was just two days ago when Mario got his tooth out and got cavity refilled in seven teeth! That is because he loved

to eat chocolates, there might be two or three kinds of candies Mario had never eaten. Dentist had strictly told him to not eat sweets, but Mario could not survive without one. He had hidden candies in the kitchen so he could eat them at night, he quietly sneaked into the kitchen and started to look for his sweets when they both saw each other. While Vidushi was really scared to see an alien, Mario was also fearing to see a witch in his kitchen at midnight, they both screamed 'Aaaaaahhh!'.

3.

Midnight talks

Vidushi yelled 'What're you doing here?'. 'Vidushi?' 'You stole my words, what're you doing here?' Mario said staring at her. 'Nothing...' she replied 'You didn't answer my question' she continued when suddenly, Mario's mother woke up and headed towards kitchen, both of them hid under the sink. 'Who's there?' mother said 'Maybe it would be my dream' she said and left. 'We were about to be caught!' Mario said 'You screamed first, it's your fault' Vidushi answered. 'Okay, I won't tell anyone that you were doing some stuff in kitchen if you don't tell mom I was eating sweets' said Mario making a deal. 'Sure' which was Vidushi's predictable answer.

Vidushi continued to type and scroll. Mario took out a packet of candies which was hidden behind the vegetable basket and a chocolate from freezer 'Such a sneaky person you are' muttered Vidushi. 'Why do you even care, just keep doing whatever you are doing' he said making a weird expression. 'Hey, you're even more sneaky, you sneaked into my home, you sneaked Madhav's laptop and now, you sneaked into my kitchen,' said Mario. 'Just shut up!' Vidushi yelled 'Eww! You like to eat circus peanuts, who even calls that an edible item' she continued as she saw Mario eating circus peanuts. Circus peanuts are one of the most unhealthy, gross and disgusting candies.

‘I’m saying again why do you care!’ Mario said with candies in his mouth ‘I’ll not care about it anymore sir’ said Vidushi giving a weird look. ‘You should care about your teeth’ she continued. ‘I do care, but I also care about these candies which were lying alone waiting for someone to eat them, see I’ve white teeth except the broken one and I’ve never even got braces’ he grumbled, grinning at Vidushi showing his white shiny teeth. ‘And I’m gonna tell Madhav that you were using his laptop, I won’t tell him that you used it in kitchen at midnight’ he said trying to irritate Vidushi ‘What’s the problem with you! Then I’ll also tell your mother that you were eating candies’ said Vidushi who was successfully irritated. Mario giggled as he knew that Vidushi won’t tell anyone.

After a while, Vidushi received a message, after reading that she started crying, she didn’t want to cry in front of Mario but she could not hold, she wailed loudly as if a bucket of tears was thrown out of her eyes. Mario thought that someone would listen and they both would be caught. ‘Why she is making sounds now only!’ he thought. He grabbed her into lobby. Mario always pretended that he is a baddie boy who doesn’t bother, because all the popular senior kids in school were the same and he wanted to be famous in school, but he was actually very kind hearted. He said ‘Okay, can I know that why are you making sounds at midnight and wanting us to be seen by someone?’ while he actually was feeling weird that someone was crying in front of him, he was feeling like that his enemy’s cute innocent baby was crying in front of him and he could do nothing. ‘Why is

she behaving strange since morning and now crying like a ghost, another proof she is a witch' he thought.

Vidushi really sounded like a witch who was crying. She honestly thought that Mario was more trustable than Veda, and she didn't even want to tell her siblings about this.

To not feel overwhelmed anymore, she decided to talk to Mario. Mario and Vidushi hadn't been good friends but they knew each other since childhood, they were at least not acquaintance because Madhav and Mario were best friends more likely to be brothers, and Veda and Vidushi were also two of the girls who were friends with Mario. Mario wasn't really friendly with girls and he didn't even like them. 'My puppy Sunny...' Vidushi said as she was sobbing, 'Yeah, I know her she is really good' Mario added. 'She's lost!' Vidushi said and continued crying. Mario felt upset because Sunny was like his own pet and he really loved her, besides, he was worried about Madhav that he'll suffer hard after listening this. 'That's really sad, I'm sorry for you' Mario said

'I am not really good at making people feel better but I would say that sometimes plot changes come so something different and amazing happens, I'm sure Sunny would be somewhere around and she'll be found soon' he said assuming that Vidushi would feel better. 'You're not really as bad as I expected Mario, I wish somehow I could find her,' said Vidushi. Mario thought for a while and a smile came on his face like he thought something awesome 'What did you just say' he asked 'That you're not that bad' she answered 'No, after that' 'I wish somehow I could find her, but why' she again replied to his question, 'We actually can!' he said as he

came up with an idea, 'Wait, what?' 'Vidushi, we can find Sunny together looking forward to small clues, we both like detective stories and are very intelligent, we can form a team together which would look for suspicious things, nowadays weird things are happening and people are afraid to raise up their voice, we can stand by them and make world a better place' said Mario who was really eager for Vidushi's response who was really very amazed,

'I'll think about the second part you said but I want to find Sunny anyway' she spoke. 'I'm really excited' Mario as he grinned. 'That somewhat sounds kiddish, we are just 11 and wouldn't it be weird just two of us working' said Vidushi who was feeling uncomfortable with Mario at the moment. 'Hey, I was just offering a hand of friendship, don't you want to find Sunny, if you say we can include Madhav too, honestly speaking I don't want to add him because, I like him as he is, and Mother says that I should make you my friend, maybe we can really find Sunny'. Mario said who really wanted his idea to work out. 'Umm... I don't often work with monkeys but I can start working with one' said Vidushi who admired what Mario said.

Mario was now very satisfied 'I'm really happy, we can add more members to our team, build a clue board and a notebook. We would first need a name!' he rapidly said 'No, we would first need some sleep as it is 1'o clock and I'm feeling sleepy' said Vidushi with a big yawn. 'Umm... okay we can start tomorrow' said Mario 'Only if you exchange bed with me,' said Vidushi. 'Sure, but do you think you should tell Veda and Madhav about Sunny' questioned Mario. 'I don't think so, I don't want to upset

them, they will come to know their selves only' said Vidushi after thinking a lot. 'Okay' said Mario.

Vidushi went to seep, while Mario washed is mouth first to hide the smell of candies. This night, Vidushi felt like sleeping the most peaceful sleep of her life till now. Mario lied down on the bed; he could not sleep for the first 30 minutes thinking about what would happen next.

4.

NIMBAURS

It was morning 8'oclock and all were supposed to get up by the time. But Mario and Vidushi took a longer sleep as they didn't sleep at night, you know what were they doing. Madhav got up around 8:15 and looked at Vidushi and Mario 'And I thought I'm the only one who wakes up late' he muttered to himself. He made his bed and then walked out of the room, strolling, he wondered when would mom come back, it was the third day and a week was left until mom would come. Veda was helping Mario's mother prepare the breakfast 'Honey, would you like some milk?' asked Mario's mother to Madhav as she came out of kitchen, 'good morning, no thanks' he said 'And yeah, please wake both of them it's almost nine' she added and ran to the kitchen.

'Mario and Vidushi wake up!' he said coming into the room solving the crossword book in his hand, he looked up and found that they were not in their beds. He looked all around, finally, he went to the veranda where he saw both of them sitting on chairs playing chess and talking. He found that strange.

'Here you are, I was looking for you everywhere. What're you two doing?' he said as he took a long breath. 'We're playing chess if you've got eyes and yeah, we were just discussing about the homework, we're in the same class,' said Mario. 'Homework? Till tomorrow you didn't even

greet each other properly and now your first activity in the morning is discussing homework...' Bell rang in Madhav's mid-sentence as the man who delivers newspapers had left one. Madhav loved reading news, he went out running to get the newspaper. 'So, what was I saying?' Mario said as he moved his knight forcing a check. 'You were talking something about how to start' Vidushi responded as she captured Mario's knight with her bishop.

'You think you're winning the game?' said Mario

'of course, I know that I'm winning'

'Okay, I was saying if you've got a mission to find something, start with basic questions such as 'How?' 'Where?' and 'Why?'

'I get it, we need to find out that how Sunny got missing, where did she go and why?'

'Yes, so first...'

'Guys, you need to read this!' Madhav came running, showing them a newspaper article. 'We'll talk about that later on bhaiya I know it would be something to do with your crossword'.

'No! the news is also coming live; a boy went missing last night!' said Madhav. 'What!' both of them exclaimed as they stood with a shocked face, Mario snatched the article and took it for reading as he was surprised.

A young boy went missing last night. His name was Lavaya and was around 8 years old, he was last seen in his bed by his mom Namita and his sister Laavanya. His

mom Namita said that he was behaving normal this night, he was cheerful and happy like he always is, she didn't think she noticed something strange in him, she went to his room and told him 'Sweet dreams' he told her 'Good night' too, he was really a simple boy and always kept smiling, he used to play basketball very well. His sister Laavanya also added her points 'I picked him from his basketball practice this evening he was normally talking to me, he said that coach praised him today and about his best friend Aditya Ranna, rest the day was normal and regular'

Appearance- Light brown eyes, yellowish skin tone pink lips and brown hair.

If found please contact the police

'Holy banana pants!' exclaimed Vidushi 'That's awful, I wonder where the poor boy, Lavaya is' Mario realized something, he grabbed Vidushi in his own personal room as he wanted to talk about it. 'Vidushi, do you think that Lavaya and Sunny getting missing is connected?' he said with his serious face on 'Yes of course that's a possible theory, do you know when Mom told me that Sunny is missing, she also mentioned a husky was missing too' Vidushi replied. 'I think the question 'How?' is answered by... may be someone kidnapped them' added Mario 'Really, there must be something common in them otherwise why would the criminal kidnap dogs' Vidushi said. 'Hmm... today is Sunday and I don't think the basketball or the other academies are open today, we can meet the boy Aditya in evening at 5'o clock' Vidushi said. 'I don't want to miss my athletics; can we go at 6?' 'Sure'.

It was almost evening, 'Mom, can I walk around the park and the neighbourhood please?' asked Mario 'Sure, but take someone with you, whom you want to come with you?' she replied, suddenly Madhav came inside and said 'Come on bro lets go, I'm ready with my boots' 'Actually no, I'm sorry but I'm planning to go with Vidushi, just her' Mario said feeling bad about refusing Madhav. Madhav again felt strange about this newly formed overnight camaraderie. First the morning chess, then homework and now going out just with her, something was going on according to Madhav.

'Vidushi, I've got another idea, can I call you 'agent V' and you can call me 'agent M' please!' said Mario as they were hopping in the street, 'Umm, you better give me nick name rather than this agent A, B, C, D' said Vidushi sarcastically. 'Okay! I'll call you Viddie. Just kidding,' said Mario. 'Look, Ranna's, this might be Aditya's house according to the house numbers' book' said Vidushi as she spotted the house. Mario rang the doorbell, a voice came out 'Sorry, I'm alone at home, I'm not allowed to open door for strangers' a boy said. 'You must be Aditya Ranna, we need to have a word with you,' said Vidushi.

'Yes, I'm Aditya, but as I said I can't trust you, I don't even know you'

'Okay, just be there on the door, you don't need to open it,' said Mario

'Okay, fine!'

'Was Lavaya you friend?'

'Yes, he's my best friend,'

‘We’re here to talk about him’

‘The last day you saw him, what conversation did you have?’

‘We were talking about Roblox and were planning to make a basketball team together’.

‘Was he talking about something new for the last few days?’

‘Yes, he said that he met a boy who told him some story about Nimbaurs’

‘Nimbaurs, what’s that?’ puzzled out Vidushi.

‘I don’t really know,’

‘Anything else...?’ asked Mario at last.

‘No, that’s all’

‘Okay, thanks for your time, Aditya’ Vidushi said as she wrote all the key details about what Aditya said in her small pocket notebook. Both of them started walking to the park. ‘Nimbaurs? Is that even a word!’ said Mario who was terrified and confused. ‘No, it’s definitely not, maybe the criminal said that to Lavaya to bring him closer to himself so he can kidnap him easily’ replied Vidushi who was thinking hard ‘That’s brilliant! But what does that do with Sunny and the other Husky?’ Mario praised her as he asked a question. Vidushi was blank this time, she didn’t know, she said that they can meet Lavaya’s family too to know more about Nimbaurs.

So, they both went there, in the way they saw Miss Rastogi who was taking 3 dogs to walk. ‘Mario, look that

is Miss Rastogi, she was responsible for the care of Sunny and the other dogs' said Vidushi as she pointed towards Miss Rastogi. Mario quickly pushed her hand down and whispered 'Vidushi, it's not good to point out someone, come on let's go' They went to her running after Vidushi sheepishly smiled and said 'Sorry!'. 'Miss Rastogi! We want to have a word with you' shouted Vidushi as she was crossing the road. Miss Rastogi got a little upset on seeing them.

'What do you want children?' Miss Rastogi said.

'I think you were in charge of a husky and a golden retriever puppy'

'Umm.... Yes' Miss Rastogi got a bit nervous on them asking about the dogs.

'And if I'm not wrong then the golden retriever was hers, am I right Vidushi?' Mario said as he looked at Vidushi

'Of course! And I wonder where did they go, Miss Rastogi, do you've an idea?'

'I really work hard with all my efforts to serve the pets, I don't know how did they went missing, that night I kept husky in the crate and the next morning it was missing, the same happened with Golden retriever'.

'May we see their crates?'

Miss Rastogi took them inside as she was scared that her boss would fire her from the job, she also wanted to find both the dogs. 'Did the crates had specific locks?' asked Mario as he touched the strong metal crate which could not be broken. 'Yes, all crates have locks and their keys

are safe with Ms. Madhu who is a very trust worthy worker, she's been working here over 20 years' Miss Rastogi said. 'Is she available now? Can we see her?'. Miss Rastogi showed them way to Ms. Madhu's cubical.

'Hi, you can call me Ms. Madhu' she said with a wonderful smile on her face. 'Hello Ms. Madhu, its nice meeting you I'm Vidushi' said Vidushi cheerfully, 'We're here for investigation not for a kitty party' whispered Mario in Vidushi's ear.

'We wanted to talk about the night when the Husky and the golden retriever got missing'

'Sure, it was a usual working night, I was working on my computer sitting in my cubical. A boy came to me to leave his pet rabbit for a month. He was really friendly, he was asking me about my family sharing his opinions, he looked really sad like he came after a fight with his life'

'Well, did he say something about himself? Please repeat every single word he said to you. Vidushi, keep noting'

'He didn't say much about himself, he came with his rabbit in a cage and said that he'll be leaving it for a month, then I asked him details about the pet and he gave a usual reply about the information of his rabbit, then he asked me 'don't you get bored working all day here, do you?' I said that it's my passion to work here which is very much true. He was looking sick, he had worn a mask and was sneezing again and again, it looked like he'd caught cold.'

'Cold? In summers, that's not usual'

'Please continue Ms. Madhu, did he say something unusual?'

‘Yes, he did, he was talking about my job and family, he asked ‘Were you forced to do this job?’ I said that I always loved animals, I was not even forced a little to do the job. Then comes the unusual part, after this sentence he started looking sad and got tears in eyes which he quickly wiped, he was a child and looked like he is suffering sadness and is not happy with his life. He said ‘I wish no bird was forced to accomplish tasks, they should be allowed to fly free, whatever, what were you saying about your daughter?’

‘Ah boy, this situation is getting worse’

‘He went and then another girl came, the same girl had come an hour ago, she forgot to mention her cat’s allergies, and then there was a power cut, I could not see anything, I went to the dogs’ crates to check if everything was alright, all were there. The next morning, I found the dogs missing, I even checked the keys and all were there’

‘Thanks, Ms. Madhu, now I think we should go,’ said Mario. ‘Wait, did anyone mention Nimbaurs to you ever?’ asked Vidushi. ‘No sweetheart’ Ms. Madhu replied ‘Well I do know!’ Miss Rastogi said suddenly. ‘I heard it from a boy who said that he’ll pay me 10,000 if I let him see our dogs. Of course, I didn’t allow’.

Both of them were stressing upon the situation, they went out and it was almost night, ‘We should go home before sunset’ said Mario ‘Remove your goggles mental-minded, it’s still day’ Said Vidushi ‘How dare you called me mental-minded?’ Mario asked ‘Because you are one!’. They both went home arguing, laughing and joking as they were tired after a long day.

5.

Gone!

It was school time Ishani, Veda and Sanya were in the same class, they were really good friends. 'Welcome a new child in class!' their class teacher said as a new boy came in. Ishani felt familiar with him 'Oh! He is Edmond, Ishan's friend, I saw him in the park the other day' she snapped as she suddenly recognized him. 'Please introduce yourself' the teacher asked Edmond to give an introduction of his self. 'Hi, I'm Edmond. I'm a half-heritage boy. I've travelled through many countries and now I've permanently shifted here, I hope we'll be good friends' he spoke. 'Edmond you can sit with Veda' teacher said as Veda moved aside giving Edmond space to sit.

'You might be Edmond, Ishani told me' Veda said. 'Oh yeah, I know Ishani she is my friend Ishan's sister I met them the other day' Edmond said 'Well, she is in this class only, by the way I am Veda, Madhav's sister' Veda said introducing herself. 'Okay, class attention! Classes 3rd to 8th are going for a zoo trip this Friday, those who are interested to go, please confirm by Thursday' The teacher announced.

Everyone was really excited in the class for the lunch break. It was lunch break, all the classes used to gather downstairs near the canteen during the lunch. Madhav, Ishan and Mario used to sit together during the lunch break. 'Mario! You coming? I've saved a seat for you'

shouted out Ishan to call him. 'I'm sorry but I'm a little busy today' he replied as he had to talk to Vidushi, you know about what. 'Why they are suddenly talking so much?' Madhav wondered. Ishani was watching all this 'Mario never denied Ishan and Madhav but today he didn't even bother, how could this happen and he is sitting with Vidushi who always sticks to me and her sister during the lunch break' she said to herself, Ishani never believed in coincidences or something normal, she always thought something is going on and had to figure out what. She was staring at them with wide eyes. 'Mario, I think we should meet Lavaya's family' Vidushi suggested. 'Sure, now let us make a theory with all the things we know'

'Miss Rastogi was walking by the street when she met a boy who talked about Nimbours and gave a trade to her saying that he'll pay him 10,000 if she allows him to see her hostel, of course she rejected,' said Mario

'Next, it was evening and a girl came to leave her cat, after she left, a shady boy came who was really suspicious, he was wearing a mask and wanted to leave his rabbit for a month,' Vidushi added as they started creating the theory one by one.

'He was sneezing again and again and was really looking sad like he is not happy with his life, he seemed to be friendly with Ms. Madhu and asked her about her family and job'

'Then, he asked Ms. Madhu whether she was forced to do the work or she did it by her choice, Ms. Madhu's

response was that caring for animals was her passion and she loved it a lot, she was never forced,’

‘After listening to this, the boy got very emotional and said ‘I wish no bird was forced to accomplish tasks every bird should fly freely’ he got tears in eyes which he quickly wiped,’

‘Then, the girl who left her cat came again and talked about her cat’s allergies, when she could simply call, then suddenly there was a power cut Ms. Madhu went to see if the pets were fine’

‘And in her absence the boy took the keys, Ms. Madhu found everyone all right, your mom also told that due to heavy rainfall there was one more power cut at night, so during that the criminal took the dogs and the camera didn’t even catch any footage’

‘Of course! And another day, a boy named Lavaya met an unknown boy who told him about this strange thing ‘Nimbaurs’’

‘Lavaya was curious about it so he told his friend Aditya about this. He went missing the next day and now we’ve to find out what happened at night, what is Nimbaurs and what relation it has with a golden retriever a husky and an 8-year-old boy and why’

‘Today we’ll meet Lavaya’s family’

Vidushi looked at her friends and sister enjoying on the table and felt left out. Vidushi asked ‘If it’s done then can I go to the other table?’ ‘What’s done?’ Ishani said who was standing at the back ‘Something is going on between you two and I need to know it, right now’ ‘It’s just

nothing, I was just coming with you girls only’ said Vidushi hiding her notebook in which she wrote details. Ishani saw the notebook and snatched and read all about their investigation.

Lost dogs and kids- Sunny, Husky and Lavaya
Strange things are happening, 2 dogs along with a boy went missing. The investigation results to a dead end.
<i>What happened at the night?</i>
<i>Where are they?</i>
<i>Who kidnapped them and why?</i>
<i>Why were the criminal so selective about kidnapping?</i>

‘What is that?’ asked Ishani ‘Should we tell her?’ asked Mario ‘Yes, we can and also include her, she is very intelligent’ whispered Vidushi. ‘I asked something and I want the answer right now!’ Vidushi told Ishani everything about what they were doing, how it started, what’ll be they doing next and about their investigation. ‘Do you want to join us?’ asked Mario ‘I’d love that, I always wanted to solve mysteries but I’m not available this evening, you two go to their house and tell me everything you come to know’ said Ishani with a smile on her face

‘Ishani! You’d need to know this, Deepanshi mam told when she was reading newspaper!’ said Ishan running with a newspaper, he was really terrified. ‘Know what?’ Ishani asked, Mario’s serious mode was on ‘One girl is missing!’ shouted Sanya from back. ‘Really? How could this happen! I feel awful, first that boy Lavaya and now this girl, I feel horrible’ said Veda as she was feeling very sorry for both Lavaya and the girl and their families. ‘Do

you think it is related to Lavaya and the dogs?’ asked Vidushi who was terrified ‘Of course it is, and we need to know why and how’

‘Children, there’s an announcement, just like Lavaya a girl named Dishita is also missing, please be careful these days. Nothing will happen but still we have to take safety measures. First, be home till the sunset, second, don’t talk to strangers, third, don’t open door when you’re alone, fourth, don’t be up late night. Thanks for your attention and be safe’ announced Deepanshi mam as government ordered. ‘What’s written in the article?’ said Vidushi.

A young girl aged around 10-11 year goes missing yesterday. Her name was Dishita, she didn't return from school, even her bus driver saw her getting on the bus stop as he left her there. Her friend said that she was randomly talking to her, like she regularly does. She was last seen on the bus stop. Police searched all around for her and the other lost boy Lavaya everywhere possible. No sudden change in behaviour was found. She has short black hair, light skin and wide eyes. Please look around if found and contact the police.

‘Oh god!’ Vidushi said. ‘You both can meet Lavaya’s family this evening,’ Ishani said, just then, the bell rang and the lunch break was over. Mario looked at Madhav and Ishan who were with Edmond, Mario felt left out.

‘Vidushi, what do you think, is all this connected?’ whispered Ishani as they were in corridors, ‘I told you earlier as well, of course it is!’ replied Vidushi, Mario went to the class. ‘Hey, you two be silent, this is you first warning’ shouted Nidhi mam who was watching them. ‘I

think that the boy who told Lavaya about Nimbaurs is the one who met Ms. Madhu' Ishani said. 'That's true, and I think the girl with cat is also with the boy, she was really strange' whispered Vidushi 'Hey, you two second warnings!' shouted Nidhi mam in an unpleasant voice. 'Yes, you're right how could...' Ishani was speaking when Nidhi mam yelled again 'Hey, Detention you two, get out of my class!'.

Both of them went to library for detention. 'Wonderful, now I'll miss my test and get bad grades' Ishani said 'Hey, look' said Vidushi as she pointed outside 'Bhaiya and Edmond? What're they doing'. 'I don't know, may be a washroom break, Veda did that with me too' they saw Edmond and Madhav talking in the corner which was quite strange. 'Hey, see a notebook on Nimbaurs!' Vidushi said as both of them saw a notebook with the label of Nimbaurs laying down on the floor along with other books, maybe they could finally investigate this mysterious word now.

'Our school library is a public library as well, so may be the thief was making notes on Nimbaurs, whatever it is!' Ishani said as she picked the notebook. 'We should go to the public section to read it otherwise some teacher would catch us' Vidushi suggested, they both went to public section and hid behind a bookshelf. They opened the notebook and read, the first page said-

Look behind you!

They felt strange but they looked behind themselves and 'boom!' they saw a boy with black outfit and a mask, who snatched the book from them and hit them on the head with a hard metal rod, they both got unconscious.

'Ishani.... Nimbaurs, Mario.... Bhaiya! Help...' muttered Vidushi as she got up on the hospital bed. It was 4'o clock and she could not believe she'd been laying unconscious there for 4 hours. She slightly opened her eyes and looked around, she could see Ishani drinking milk on other bed with her mom and dad sitting around her, she looked Mario's mom was talking to the doctor, Mario, Veda and Madhav were standing around. Madhav saw her 'Look! She's conscious now' he shouted as he was satisfied. Veda hugged her and asked 'Are you alright sis? What were you doing in public library, how did you faint?'. Mario looked at both of them and knew that something had happened that he had to know.

'They've got serious injuries on head and are supposed to be admitted to the hospital, other circumstances could lead to memory loss, permanent headache or other brain issues' said doctor to Mario's mom and Ishani's dad.

Everyone left the room so doctors could examine them, they required daily medication and rest as the injury was deep. Both of them slept after the doctors left. Mario entered the room to check them and ask about what happened. 'Ishani, Vidushi, wake up!' he whispered. Both of them got up after a while. 'Are you both fine?' he asked trying to be friends with them and show that he also cares. 'Umm...I guess so' replied Ishani in a low voice. 'What happened there?' he asked. 'As you know, we both got

detention’ said Ishani, ‘In the library, we saw a notebook that belonged to someone which talked about Nimbaurs’ Vidushi added. ‘We picked it up and went to the public section to hide so teachers could not catch us,’ continued Ishani. ‘We read the first page that said ‘look behind you’ we looked behind and saw a boy who snatched the notebook from us and hit us with a hard metal rod, it still pains’ said Vidushi completing the answer. ‘Woah! That’s strange’ said Mario as he was shocked.

‘Now, maybe you should go for the investigation, here you go take the clue notebook,’ said Vidushi. Mario checked the address book again and went to Lavaya’s house. He rang the bell, a lady who was Lavaya’s mother, Namita came out. ‘Hi, I am Mario, I wanted to talk about Lavaya’ he pleasantly said. Namita started crying, then suddenly her daughter Laavanya came and said ‘Why did you remind mom!’. Laavanya took her mom inside and welcomed Mario. ‘Hi, Mario I am Lavaya’s sister. He was a very pleasant boy’ Laavanya said. ‘Did he perform some strange activities or had strange wishes these days?’ asked Mario. ‘Well, he always has strange wishes, like he wants to go to Mars, he wants to meet his imaginary character, but yeah, he had an odd wish, he said that he wants to discover Nimbaurs’ Laavanya said.

‘I get it’, nodded Mario.

‘I heard it from Aditya, that you were asking about Lavaya’, enquired Laavanya.

‘Yeah, I’m trying to investigate’.

‘ He said that one another girl named Vid...Vidus...hi was also with you, where is she?’

‘ Well, she is sick.’

‘ Sad. Well, please confirm if you get to know something about my brother.’

‘ Sure.’

Strolling, Mario went to Dishita’s house; he was wondering what would be written in the notebook. Ishani and Vidushi were talking about Nimbaurs. The surgeries were going on; Vidushi was scared about it. It was night, around 10 pm, everyone slept except the three. Mario rushed to the hospital room from the guest room. He came in and said ‘Before going to Dishita’s house, I went to the public library, there I found a page was left from their Nimbaurs notebook. It says-

Victims-

Lavaya

Dishita

Madhav

Three of them were astonished to see Madhav’s name on the list, Vidushi turned a bundle of nerves, so did Mario and Ishani.

6.

What just happened?

Suddenly doctors came inside 'It's time for medication, boy go outside,' they said 'Doctor, I need to see my bhaiya please!' cried Vidushi. 'Not right now'. Doctors replied, they called the nurse and asked her to leave Mario in his guest room. 'No! he's in...,' cried Mario. Next morning was horrible, Vidushi and Ishani were alright now and went to their homes. 'I wonder where is Madhav' said Mario's mom. Vidushi and Mario recalled it. They both starting sweating. Vidushi was very upset and was about to cry, Mario was feeling the same. 'Mom, I'm going' said Mario as he ran outside 'Where?' said Veda but Mario didn't listen, a little while after, Vidushi also ran after Mario as they knew he was most probably gone. Guest house near the hospital was just 500 meters away, Veda also ran after Vidushi. 'Madhav!' 'Bhaiya!'.... they both cried 'Vidushi, bhaiya would be somewhere around, he'll be at the park hanging out, you come home' said Veda as she wasn't aware. 'No, he's gone, he's gone!' shouted Mario as his eyes watered.

Soon, everyone found out that Madhav is also missing.

Veda was crying loudly, while Vidushi was just standing aside as her tired eyes stared at her depressed sister in fury. Everyone was worried. Newspapers came and Mario stared at the article about Madhav. 'I'll kill the criminal; he would be soon rotting in the prison badly'

muttered Mario. Ishani came to their house, 'Hey, I feel sorry about Madhav' she said. 'Today, we can investigate' Mario suggested.

'That's enough!' yelled Vidushi. 'I lost my dad, I lost Sunny and now, I lost Bhaiya'. 'And we're trying to find them' said Ishani 'No, that's stupid, it really is, what do you think a couple of children would solve a crime?' Vidushi said as she was really livid.

'I think she is upset right now, we'll see her later onwards' whispered Mario to Ishani 'Mario, just think about it, the criminal hit us on head and snatched the notebook right that time, I don't think it's possible that a page fell down itself, look at its borders, it looks like it has been torn by someone and left for us to pick, it seems like that they wanted us to read it,' Ishani said, 'you're a genius! This case is getting puzzled day by day,'.

Next morning, they went to school. 'Class, who is going for the school trip?' asked Nidhi Mam. Everyone in class was going except Edmond. 'Edmond why aren't you going?' asked Sanya 'I'm allergic to animal fur' he spoke. It was lunch break, Ishani and Mario grabbed their lunch and sat on the table, 'Is Vidushi coming?' asked Ishani as she gnawed the crumbs of her left-over sandwich. 'Well, I don't know. She might not come' said Mario who was thinking deeply about all the children and dogs who went missing, 'I wonder what was common in them'. 'Well, I think I know' said Vidushi as she came and sat on the bench with them. 'Wait, what?' said Mario as he was confused.

'Just think about it, why would the criminal kidnap them. What are the main purposes of criminals kidnaping, unfair trade, money and to make them their servants, but why they were so selective about kidnaping them? Dishita, Lavaya, Bhaiya, Sunny and the husky, what's so special about them?' Vidushi explained taking a bite from her sandwich.

'That was a good explanation. Nimbaurs! I think it is actually something but has been given a code word'

'That's a possible theory, I just can't understand anything' Mario was all jumbled up.

'Hmmm... all the answers were in that notebook'

'I wonder who was that boy in the library. Who could he possibly be'

At night, they went to the public library which was their school library as well. No one was there. 'This was the spot where we got unconscious,' said Ishani. 'Oh my god! Girls, you won't believe if I told you' Mario said surprisingly. Ishami and Vidushi came near Mario, 'What is it?' Mario pushed both of them behind himself to hide and pointed at a section in corner where they saw two boys with Nimbaurs notebook in one's hand who were hiding and discussing, they were looking worried.

Two of the boys seemed to be worried; both dressed in black suits and masks. 'How'll we face her?' muttered one of them 'I've no idea,' said the second one. 'She'll kill us all' said the first one again. They heard them talking. They took their eyes off for a while. 'That's...something I don't

have a word for!' exclaimed Mario. As they looked back, they found the two boys disappeared.

'Where have they gone?' said Vidushi 'Look, the notebook is there on the floor' Ishani ran to fetch the notebook when one of those boys who seemed to be familiar came. He took the notebook before Ishani, Ishani snatched it. The boy pushed her, Ishani fell on floor and the notebook as well, the boy was about to pick up the notebook when Mario came and stopped and slapped him, the boy hit Mario hard, his nose started bleeding.

Vidushi took the notebook and the three ran, the boy was after them. Suddenly the librarian came and saw them 'what're you kids doing?' she asked as it was almost 10:00 pm. 'Nothing, we were here to read something' said Mario as he hid his injury. The librarian went out. 'Are you alright?' asked the boy. 'Why're you asking this, you were the one to hit him' said Vidushi as the three stepped back to the corner, there was no place to run. They were scared.

'Don't be afraid, just give that to me, it's for your good,' said the boy. 'We don't even know who you are' screamed Ishani. 'Don't open it, please don't force me to hurt you,' said the boy. 'Okay we won't, but on one condition, you've to tell us everything' said Ishani, 'We can't trust him,' said Mario. The boy came closer, the three were getting scared, he snatched the notebook and ran away. 'No! we lost it,' said Mario

'Who was he?' questioned Ishani. Next morning, V2M's mom came back from work. 'My son! Where is he' she started crying as she received the news. Vidushi

somehow had an idea what was going on. They went to school. It was first period which was free. Ishani was distracted by the case far away so she forgot to do the homework. 'Sanya, can I borrow your notebook for completing my work?' asked Ishani, 'I'm sorry, but I forgot it at home', 'No problem,' said Ishani. 'Edmond, can I borrow your notebook?' 'Sure, you can take it from my bag' said Edmond as he was busy in playing chess. Ishani opened the bag and took the notebook, she saw that one book from another pocket was sliding out, so she kept the book inside, in the same pocket she saw something insane, Nimbaurs!

Ishani quickly took the Nimbaurs notebook. Many things were making sense now; she was about to open it but then the teacher came. Maths period had started, Ishani was staring at Edmond, Edmond got nervous on seeing her, he checked the bag and found Nimbaurs notebook missing. He knew it was Ishani who took it. It was lunch break. Ishani grabbed Edmond and the notebook to the back of canteen, where nobody could find them. 'Who're you?' 'What is this' 'Where are the pets and children?' asked Ishani as she didn't let Edmond go.

'Do you've any idea where Ishani is?' asked Mario as both of them were sitting on the desk waiting for her, 'I don't know, she'd be coming' said Vidushi as she ate the crumbs of salad. 'Mom and Veda are worried about Bhैया, so am I, everything was happening in front of our eyes but we couldn't save him' said Vidushi as she started to look downcast. 'We're doing everything that is possible' said Mario trying to make her feel better 'I also

love Madhav, I miss him, I wish I could spend our days happily' he continued as his eyes watered 'I know, I just miss him' Vidushi added.

'Ishani, give me that', said Edmond 'No I'll not!' yelled Ishani. She opened the notebook, it was a normal notebook with ruled pages at first but then, in exactly the centre page, a beautiful painting of a forest in the rain appeared. 'What's this?' asked Ishani 'You'll not understand, give me the notebook, it's all my fault to bring this at school,' said Edmond. 'No, tell me right now or I will tear and burn this thing,' said Ishani. 'Okay, okay, I can't tell you but I can show you, hold my hand' said Edmond as he decided to reveal.

Ishani took Edmond's hand; Edmond touched the painting of the rainy forest. *WHOOSH!* Ishani opened her eyes to heavy rain. Soaked to the skin, she found herself in a forest full of bushes—just like the one in the painting. 'Woah! Where am I? Aah! Is this a dream! We were in school, where are we, how will we get back!' shouted Ishani as she got up. Edmond was standing there 'Come, or someone will see you'. Edmond took Ishani to a house which was built inside a redwood tree. It was one of the smallest redwood trees Ishani had ever seen. The door and the windows were sticking out of the trunk. They went inside. 'I've never seen something like this ever,' said Ishani.

'Hey, answer my questions', 'Well, we're in Nimbaurs' said Edmond preparing coffee. 'This is my home, I live here. It's glad to see someone in my house who is a friend' he continued 'Do you live here? It's unbelievable and

beautiful as well. In which country we are?' asked Ishani, 'Well, this is Nimbaurs, you can assume it as a hidden country' he said 'Would you like some coffee?' 'Yes please!' answered Ishani. 'This is totally delicious, from which café is it?' 'I made this from special coffee plant of Nimbaurs' said Edmond.

A huge voice came from out, 'knock, knock' someone was on the door. Edmond asked Ishani to quickly hide behind the cupboard. 'She is calling you' said a huge man who was a half-giant. Edmond got scared, he was sweating. Ishani could not understand a thing. The man went out, 'Ishani, you better go back, this place is not safe for you, not for anyone of us' said Edmond as he was in hurry. 'How should I go back?' questioned Ishani. 'Here, touch this page of this book and you'll be in the park, take the Nimbaurs notebook with you, it'll be behind the canteen, keep it safe. Remember, the notebook will leave you at the park, it can mostly be me or my friend Himank coming' Edmond explained quickly.

Ishani touched the book and closed her eyes, she felt a little dizzy, but when she opened her eyes, she was in the park. What just happened, Ishani was feeling the same. She went out and realized that she missed the lunch break. She went to school running and quietly climbed over the garden wall behind canteen and reached the school. But what explanation she would give to the teacher on her asking that where is Edmond, what was that important Edmond had to run out for?

It was Hindi period, suddenly their teacher came and asked 'Sorry to disturb, but may I know that where is

Edmond?’ Ishani’s heartbeat was running as fast as a cheetah. ‘He went with his brother Himank for some emergency, a teacher from reception reported me,’ said the teacher. Ishani was satisfied, ‘Isn’t Himank the boy whom Edmond talked about’ thought Ishani. Edmond and Himank were clever. It was dispersal time; Ishani was eager to tell Mario and Vidushi everything.

As she was wet after the rainfall, she started shivering. Mario was with Ishan, Veda and Vidushi were looking for Ishani on the gate. ‘Vidushi, where Bhaiya would be? How he will be feeling!’ said Veda as she was worried, but Vidushi was cracking the case as soon as she could so she wasn’t worried that much ‘Everything will be fine sis,’. Ishani came running as fast as she could, she grabbed Mario and Vidushi with her. ‘Woah, what made you that wet’ exclaimed Mario as he was shocked. ‘Where were you! we were looking for you,’ mumbled Vidushi.

‘Relax, see what I got’ said Ishani as she showed them the Nimbaurs notebook. ‘What! Where did you get it!’ they both shouted in happiness, ‘Yes, I revealed everything! Almost everything,’ said Ishani eagerly. ‘Really, what, how?’ questioned Mario who was uncertain about what Ishani said. ‘This morning, I asked Edmond for his Maths notebook so I could finish my work. He told me to grab it from his bag, so I did. That’s when I spotted the Nimbaurs’ notebook tucked inside.

During lunch break, I pulled Edmond aside behind the canteen to talk. At first, he muttered evasively and refused to say anything. He just wouldn't tell me... so I had to blackmail him.

Reluctantly, he opened the notebook. At first glance, it looked like any ordinary ruled notebook, completely blank. But right in the middle page, there was an image—a painting of a beautiful forest, drenched in rain. I stared at it. Then Edmond asked me to hold his hand. As I did, he touched the image. Instantly, my head spun. Everything blurred... and the next thing I knew, I had woken up in that very forest—rain pouring down, just like in the painting. Edmond led me to his house—nestled inside the trunk of a redwood tree. It was the smallest redwood tree I'd ever seen, yet somehow it held a warm and cozy space within. Inside, he handed me a cup of steaming coffee, the aroma grounding me amid the surreal moment. 'This place is called Nimbaurs' said Ishani in one go, she took a long breath.

'Everything made sense in that moment—Nimbaurs is a hidden world. The final proof that Edmond was the boy, he never meant to hurt us in the library. He'd once said he was allergic to animal fur, which is why he couldn't join the school trip. That must be why the boy sneezed when he was near the cat... because it was Edmond! He looked so sad, as if forced to follow orders he didn't believe in. Then, near the end, a man appeared. Edmond showed me a book and told me to touch it. I did—and in a blink, I was in the park and then, I came running here. Before I could speak, he asked me to keep the notebook safe. 'There won't be many visitors,' he said softly, 'except me and my friend' Ishani blurted out the whole story in a rush, her eyes wide with disbelief.

They both stared at her, stunned. 'I don't trust you,' Mario said as his voice was firm. 'You're soaked, and just because the boy had Edmond's allergies doesn't mean I'm going to buy into a fairytale' His uncertainty had deepened, eyes narrowing as he stepped back.

'Mario, that's really rude! The least you can do is be polite, even if you don't agree with her,' Vidushi shouted clearly upset by his harshness. Mario didn't reply. He simply turned and walked away. Despite standing up for her friend, Vidushi felt a flicker of doubt. After all, when an eleven-year-old starts talking about magical lands hidden in tree trunks and teleporting notebooks, it's hard to believe right away. She knew Ishani wasn't someone who lied – not ever. But trusting a fantastical story... that was a different matter entirely.

Ishani was exhausted. She didn't know herself that what she saw was real, or just an imagination. She stared at the drawing again and again. As Veda and Vidushi returned home, their mom was really upset and was wailing. 'My son....my Madhav' she murmured as she was crying. It was painful to watch a mother mourning for her child. Veda felt the ache deep in her chest, but Vidushi's reaction was different. She had endured so much recently: her mother refusing to eat, grieving over Madhav, losing her pet, being attacked by a strange boy. And now Ishani, her closest friend, was telling stories that sounded like fantasies – about magical worlds, vanishing children, tree houses, and notebooks that teleport people. Nimbaurs. What even was that?

Ishani claimed that it was real—a hidden world. But Mario didn't believe her, and to Vidushi, it all felt too far-fetched. As much as she wanted to trust Ishani, part of her couldn't help wondering if this was just another tale told by a tired eleven-year-old who'd seen too much.

Next morning they went to school. Mario and Vidushi missed school that day because they had to figure out the case. Assembly was just over when Edmond rushed to school. He got scolded by teacher for getting late. Edmond came and sat with Ishani. 'Why're you late? Where were you?' asked Ishani 'Well, you know' said Edmond, 'I know what?' questioned Ishani blankly, Edmond started to sweat and got really worried, 'Nimbaurs! Where is the notebook?' yelled Edmond at Ishani. Ishani was lost for a while; she remembered her moments in Nimbaurs. She worriedly murmured 'The notebook....it's...it's with Vidushi' 'Does she know about Nimbaurs?' questioned Edmond worriedly 'I told her but she didn't believe me'. 'Oh no! That's not good' The whole time in school they both were worried, really worried. Vidushi was in Mario's house with the Nimbaurs notebook. 'How can it just be a notebook!' wondered Mario, 'Hey, do you believe in Ishani?' 'of course not!' replied Mario 'She didn't even join the meeting!'.

The middle page with the drawing of rainy forest was open. Mario touched the book and felt the page, his hand got stuck in the book, 'Vidushi! Vidushi! My hand got stuck here, I can't move it' he shouted 'What?' said

Vidushi who was confused. She tried to pull out Mario's hand, suddenly they vanished into thin air!

Whoosh! Rain drops were splashing on her. Vidushi slightly opened her eyes and saw trees and bushes around her 'What! This can't be true' thought Vidushi. 'Mario! Mario? Ishani....where are you?' she shouted out as she took a few steps forward in the long bushy grass. She saw Mario laying down on the grass unconscious. 'You mental-minded, get up!' shouted Vidushi as she shook him a little bit, 'Woah! What, this can't be true! Where am I?' muttered Mario as he got up, he looked around, 'Hey, pinch me' said Mario as he felt the breeze, 'Ishani was saying the truth, if I'm not wrong, we're in Nimbours' Vidushi added. They heard a voice, they got scared, really scared. They held close to each other. 'Vidd...Vidushi....look' Mario mumbled as he pointed out at lion's paws, 'aaaah!' they were really scared.

On the other hand, Ishani and Edmond were worried about both of them, they came to Vidushi's house, their mom was not in the mood to talk so Veda opened the door. 'Edmond, Ishani, I didn't expect you here' she said. 'Is Vidushi home and what about Mario?' asked Ishani, 'Well, Vidushi went to Mario's house' she replied as both of them ran to Mario's house, 'Hello, I am looking for Vidushi and Mario' greeted Ishani to Mario's mom. 'Hello you two, please come inside, they are in his room' said Mario's mom.

They both rushed in there, nobody was inside. 'Ishani, look for the notebook,' commanded Edmond. They were hurrying to find it; it was kept on the desk and the forest

page was open. 'Hold my hand' said Edmond as he quickly picked up the notebook, Ishani did so and they both were teleported to the forest, Ishani stared at it with her wide eyes, it was the same. They both started looking for Mario and Vidushi. While, Mario and Vidushi were scared.

Vidushi ran away without thinking anything. 'Vidushi....wait...!' shouted out Mario but she didn't listen. Mario heard a sound from bushes and he foolishly ran away. It was just a squirrel in there. They both got apart. 'Mario! Mario....Vidushi? where are you?' called out Edmond. Ishani was just looking at the surroundings, how did she get there, she knew it but could not make any sense. 'If they're found by someone, I, Himank and some others will be in a great trouble' 'How can you be so reckless! First, you blackmailed me to show you this, then, you made me tell you everything, that's not the end, then, you took the notebook, carelessly showed it to Mario and Vidushi and gave them! How!' yelled Edmond at Ishani as he was really angry, Ishani could be very upset, yet, she surprisingly wasn't.

She was unable to give any reply, how tall and wonderful the trees were, lush green trees and bushes, thorny roses and birds chirping, how could Ishani take off her mind from this after experiencing such a busy city Chandigarh. 'Are you even listening? If we don't find them today, I'll be in trouble, all because of you!' he continued, Ishani was just nodding.

Mario was running as fast as he could, after realizing that he is safe, he stopped and looked around. Such a pleasant

weather it was, rain had stopped. He was just enjoying the touch of nature, after a while, he came back to reality and suddenly got terrified and scared, how did he reach here? How can he go back home? He walked a few steps forward and saw a stream. Suddenly a leash of 3 foxes came hopping. 'Oh cute!' he giggled 'Not cute, you, silly boy' said an old grumpy fox, she had small ears and an orange coat, her eyes looked wicked.

'Wait, what! You just talked! He exclaimed, 'of course we can, I'm Raven' said another fox who seemed to be friendly, she had white, bright fur. Mario was so terrified he trotted and fell down; another fox jumped on him and started sniffing. 'Leave me, I'm innocent, please!' he blurted. 'Relax, we're not hurting you, I'm Onyx,' said the Fox. Mario felt a little comfortable, but still insecure. He sat up and stared at them; he was amazed. 'Can....you show me way home?' he asked as he was blurting. 'Sure, where do you live?' asked Raven. 'Chandigarh ...' he replied, 'Chandigarh? Is that even a name?' Onyx said as he didn't know. The foxes took him in their home which formed from twigs and plants which seemed to be small, of course, Mario could not fit in it. The old fox came and asked his name 'What's your name, you mental-minded?' she asked

'I'm Mario, do you know Vidushi? She is the only one who calls me mental-minded' said Mario, 'No, would you like some berries?' said Raven as she offered some red, juicy berries to him, Mario gulped them all in one go. 'Who is Vidushi?' asked Onyx, 'She is my really good friend, have you seen her?' Mario replied. 'No, tell me

more about your friends' said Onyx, 'Well, Madhav is my best friend, but he is kidnapped, and I, Vidushi and Ishani are trying to figure out how, by the way, Ishani is my friend Ishan's sister, she told me about this place, I had no idea about it' said Mario as he was chewing the berries.

'Mario! Where are you...?' a voice said coming from behind the trees. The foxes got insecure about the voice and hopped away; Edmond came from there followed by Ishani. 'Mario...here you are!' said Edmond as he was glad and satisfied to see him. 'Hey...where were you?' asked Ishani 'I was talking to foxes, who were really sweet' Mario replied, 'No one is safe here, what're you eating?' added Edmond, 'Berries....they are tasty' said Mario, 'Spit them out, you can't just put anything in mouth someone gives you' said Edmond as he slapped Mario on his head. 'Where is Vidushi?' asked Ishani. 'I don't know, she ran,' said Mario. 'How could you just leave her?' muttered Edmond. 'I didn't notice!' said Mario. Three of them started looking for her. She could be anywhere, lost in the scariest cave or in the deepest lake.

7.

Getting to know more

Vidushi was running very fast like she is in a cross-country race. When she felt it was safe, she stopped. Where was she? She was amazed. Tall trees and bushy ferns, it was raining lightly, soft breeze was touching her face. There she saw windows and a door sticking out of a redwood tree; it was not quite a big one. She was getting wet as the rain was getting heavier slowly, she went inside to see what's there. A house was in the tree! This was unbelievable. It seemed to be huge from outside, but really wasn't, it was small but cute and comfy. There was a small kitchen in which soup was boiling on a *wood-burning-cookstove*, it seemed to be delicious. There was not much, except a shoe rack near the door and a small bed with a wardrobe. The cutest part was the chairs and benches near the fire place. Everything seemed to be well-maintained.

Vidushi was fascinated to see all this; she could spend her whole life in that house. Suddenly, someone came inside, he was a boy wearing a heavy coat, he had a pale-yellow-dusty skin tone and was slim with wavy black hair. Vidushi got petrified to see him, she took steps backwards and reached the corner, it was like a death moment for her. 'Relax, don't be afraid, I'm not harming you' said the boy as he took off his heavy coat. 'You must be Edmond's friend' he continued, 'Y...yes...how...d-do you know...?' blurted Vidushi. 'Well, I'm his friend.

Myself, Himank' introduced the boy. 'Himank, where am I?' asked Vidushi who was comfortable as well as scared. 'Well, you're in Nimbaurs,' said Himank. 'What! This can't be. How did I get here and how will I go back! I live in Chandigarh' said Vidushi who got even more scared. 'Don't worry, the book is with Edmond, he'll help you go back there' answered Himank, 'What, I need to go home, not read a book!' said Vidushi who was now terrified,

'You must have touched the Nimbaurs notebook at the middle page for more than 5 seconds, that's why it teleported you here, it's not a fairytale but when you touch a specific book at the middle page, it teleports you to the place the book is about' explained Himank. 'Oh really, this place is beautiful' said Vidushi, 'Yes, but it's not safe for you here' added Himank

'Why?' questioned Vidushi

'Uhm...I can't tell...I can't name her...' stammered Himank.

'What's wrong? Tell me straight away'

'Al...Alaika, her name is Alaika, she is ruling Nimbaurs. She is half human and half fire. She is made up of fire'

'Really?'

'Yes, and she is the most powerful being in Nimbaurs'

'Is she bad?'

'Yes, she is really bad, she turns everyone into ashes if we don't listen to her'

‘Why is she doing all this? And how is she evil? Why is she fire, how can someone be fire?’

‘Calm down, I’ll answer all the questions one by one. She wants to be immortal, that’s why she needs blood of enemy, but this even curses her. She can live forever, but with a curse of living with fire-like body. You know all the youths and dogs who went missing? They were her enemies in past life. She feeds on their blood. All those are in her prison’ explained Himank with all his patience.

‘Really? So why are you both here, can’t you just run away’

‘Edmond and I are her servants. We’ve to serve her, or she can kill us anytime she finds us. Her servants are rapidly spread in the world; no one can save us if we betrayed’

‘That’s sad! I wish I could stop her. My pet and my brother are with her’

Vidushi got sad. She finally knew the truth; truth is always bitter. She was even proud of her brother as he fought against the bad in his past life. ‘Where is Mario?’ asked Vidushi, ‘Was he also with you! Oh no, he might be in trouble,’ said Himank.

‘Himank, a girl named Vidushi is missing’ said Edmond as he suddenly approached there followed by Mario and Ishani. Edmond didn’t have any idea of Vidushi being there but was satisfied to see her. Vidushi was also glad to see Mario and Ishani; she came running and hugged Ishani. ‘Where were you?’ she asked, ‘I was with Himank, he is really friendly, I’m sorry Ishani, we didn’t believe

you earlier' said Vidushi, 'Hey, you mental-minded apologise to Ishani' she continued 'Fine! I'm sorry' said Mario bluntly 'Do you know an old grumpy fox?' asked Mario 'No...' replied Vidushi 'She is just like you, she also calls me mental-minded and has a face like a rotten banana' Mario said getting back to his character, 'How dare you! She was right to say you mental-minded' said Vidushi as they started arguing 'Wait...did you meet foxes?' said Himank, 'He did' said Ishani pointing towards Mario, 'I'm still warning you guys, this place is not safe at all' warned Himank. They all sat down near the fire place having some coffee. 'By the way, I'm sorry Vidushi and Ishani, I was the one to hurt you in the library' apologised Himank, 'How dare you! My mom got so worried and had to spend 7800 for the surgery, besides, they suffered a lot to' said Mario,

'That's fine. I can connect all the things now!' said Ishani as she continued the explanation, 'The day I met Edmond first time, he was really dirty and wet he made an excuse that he was cleaning the showroom this morning and I felt suspicious, because you actually were doing something in Nimbours. Then, you were the one to meet Miss Rastogi to steal the keys, you were sneezing again and again because you were actually allergic to animal fur as you told. You looked sad, and who was that girl? You were also the boy we met in library' said Ishani 'Yes, the explanation is correct' added Edmond 'Why were you sad?' asked Mario 'Because he was forced to serve Alaika, and if I'm not wrong the day, you were dirty, you were serving her only. And I guess the girl with you was also Alaika's servant' said Vidushi based on her

understanding about what Himank told, 'How did you know that! And the girl there was Dishita who was hypnotized and asked to accomplish the job, she was not yet captured that time,' Edmond exclaimed 'Himank told me,' said Vidushi. 'Who is Alaika?' asked Mario, Edmond explained everything to him. Mario was even more worried about Madhav now. 'I miss him,' he said 'Hey, what if we build a team and defeat Alaika!' suggested Mario 'Everything is not a game, it is just like calling the death closer' yelled Edmond.

'Why is she like that' muttered Ishani, 'Because...I don't know...' Himank tried to answer. 'I think we should get back' suggested Vidushi, 'Of-course! I totally forgot about the real world,' said Mario. Edmond brought them to his home, 'I remember this, it's beautiful' said Ishani, 'Okay, so now touch here on this page, the page showed the park with Miss Khanna and Diya's shop. 'I guess, we'll keep meeting' said Himank, 'Sure, I'm eager to come back here again' added Mario, 'There is no again, Nimbaurs is dangerous for you' said Himank, 'Please!' begged Ishani 'We'll see depending on situation, you must not tell anyone else,' said Edmond. They touched the page and opened their eyes; they were in the park. 'That was amazing' said Vidushi as the three were excited to continue the adventure now.

8.

Sick

The next day at school was interesting. Just after the lunch break, a boy named Yash got into a fight with Edmond. This was a really crazy fight; teachers were watching, so Yash decided to see Edmond after the school. Yash was a bully; he was simply so irritating that everyone in school thought that isn't his mother fed up of him. This all began at the lunch break when Mario and Edmond were talking and buying the food from canteen. They were so lost in words that Edmond totally forgot to look after when he bumped his head with Yash, 'My bad,' he said 'Are you blind, you hob-goblin!' he yelled, that was very rude of him, 'Excuse me, I am sorry there was no need to yell and use such kind of language' he apologised again, 'Oh really, now you'll teach me?' Yash said and whistled calling out his friends, everyone started throwing water at Edmond.

Mario fought with one of the boys, he was just pretending to hit them but the boys actually injured Mario. Edmond was all wet, he was feeling cold, light and cool breeze started which even made him feel colder. The other day Edmond didn't come to school, the three were wondering why. They were on the walking path nearby the park and then suddenly saw Edmond teleporting there. They tried to hide him. 'Edmond!' Vidushi called out. Edmond came to them. 'Why didn't you come to school?' asked Ishani 'Was it something to do with Nimbaurs?', 'Oh, was there

a zombie attack!’ said Mario making the conversation weirder like he always does, ‘Mario, that’s enough, Edmond you may continue’ said Ishani, ‘I am s...sick’ said Edmond as he sneezed loudly, ‘Really, stay away then, sorry to say but I don’t want to invite germs’ Ishani stood back, ‘I caught a cold after the fight, I was drenched and was feeling cold’ said Edmond, ‘Take care,’ the three went home.

Ishani had invited Vidushi to her house in the evening. She was on her way when she saw Edmond sitting on the bench, he seemed to be half dead. ‘Edmond, why’re you sitting here like a frog?’ Vidushi was surprised, ‘As I said earlier, I’m under the weather!’ said Edmond in a frail voice, ‘Take me back home’ he continued. ‘Oh...kay, I’m calling Mario,’ she said as she was a little startled to see Edmond in such condition. She took out her phone from the pocket and called Mario, after a few minutes, Mario arrived. ‘What happened dude, are you alright?’ he asked concernedly, ‘Leave me home...’.

Ishani came there too, ‘What’s going on?’ she asked, ‘Nothing, we’ve got Edmond to leave home,’. Mario pulled the notebook out of his bag and opened it, he grabbed Edmond behind the tree, four of them held hands together and touched the middle page, and as you know they warped to Nimbaurs, just in front of Edmond’s house. ‘That was familiar,’ said Ishani with a side-smile on her face. The four got into the house. Edmond’s condition was getting worse. Mario made him lay down on the bed and Vidushi got him some water.

‘Are you alright?’ asked Ishani, ‘I don’t know...I’m feeling like I’ve got a brain freeze’ he said.

‘Edmond, come on Alaika is calling us...’ said Himank as he rushed to open the door and came in, ‘What are you guys doing here?’, ‘Oh Himank! they’ve been a life saviour for me’ he said in a low-pitched frail voice. ‘Well, Alaika is calling you, right now!’ he said, ‘Can’t you see him, he is sick, he can’t even stand on his own’ Vidushi said, ‘She is gonna kill us!’ Himank muttered. ‘Oh really, then I’ve to go’ Edmond said as he intimidated by Alaika. ‘No, you can’t!’ yelled Ishani ‘You’ll faint after taking two steps’, Mario got into deep thoughts; he was just listening to them. ‘Alaika can come here, and then you all will be in danger,’. ‘Hey,’ Mario finally spoke up, ‘Maybe I can go in place of you,’. Everyone was shocked especially Himank, ‘You’ve got to be kidding’.

‘No, I’m serious. I...can go...maybe,’ blurted Mario, ‘You haven’t seen what she can do, she is horrible’, ‘Else what, as Himank said, do you want her to hurt more people after she finds out that you’re here sticking with us’ said Mario confidently, ‘What you said was both very selfless and fearless of you Mario, but I also suggest you to not take the risk, you don’t know what she can do!’ said Ishani, ‘I agree with Ishani, but I think I also find Mario right’ concluded Vidushi, ‘Himank, you can tell me how to behave there’ suggested Mario, ‘Me? Are you sure about that’, ‘Yes,’. Edmond could not give any suggestions. He was feeling like he is living his last few days of life. ‘Mario, you’ve to be very careful’ said Ishani as she was not sure about letting Mario go. ‘Okay, I’m

giving you small introduction of how to act there,’ said Himank. Himank started to explain Mario while Vidushi and Ishani went to fetch some herbs that could cure Edmond, just as he told.

Both of them went out hopping, the weather was wet and pleasant, Nimbours was having a rainy season nowadays. Ishani was hopping joyfully with no stress while Vidushi was acting like her body guard. She carried a long wood rod with her for defending herself. ‘Oh! There are those berries!’ said Ishani as she ran to fetch them. Vidushi was just watching her,

‘Hello, may I help you?’ said a voice, Vidushi looked around to find out who was speaking, she looked at the left and right, no one was there, ‘Hey, down here’ the voice called out again, Vidushi found out a fox, a fox who was talking to her. ‘What’s it?’ asked Ishani as she was done with the collection. She looked at the fox and got frightened to see it. Vidushi raised her rod and took Ishani behind her. Both of them were afraid, suddenly a fox came out of the bushes and said, ‘Hi, I’m Onyx, who are you two?’ he said, ‘Stay...st...stay back!’ Ishani shouted, ‘Don’t panic, I’m not hurting you’ he said again, Ishani suddenly realized something and spoke up, ‘Hey, are you that speaking fox Mario met?’ ‘M...Mario, no of course not! I’m not the only fox who speaks’ Onyx replied.

The rain started; rain drops touched their face. ‘We’ve to go,’ said Ishani as they both rushed to Edmond’s house, ‘Wait...’ Onyx called out but they didn’t listen. They were drenched; they came running in the house where Himank

taught Mario everything about how he has to behave. 'Okay, so how'll you greet her,' said Himank and Mario bowed down, 'And... how to speak when she calls out your name,' 'I'm listening, your majesty' Mario said. So, the training was done.

'That's good' said Ishani, everyone was really worried about Mario. Himank and Mario were about to leave when Edmond called out 'Best of luck, and remember your name is Edmond'. Mario was wearing a mask, a heavy furry coat and boots.

He was told to be obedient like a prince, alert like a soldier and confident like a lawyer. They were crossing streams and hills. Then finally, it was time to climb up a high mountain, 'I'm dead' Mario said, 'Come on!'. They started to climb up; Mario was panting while Himank was comfortable because he climbed up there daily and had a strong stamina. The higher they went, the cooler it got, the bushy ferns and tall trees were now replaced by a huge coniferous forest. Sunlight was barely felt; besides, it was rainy season in Nimbaurs so they didn't receive much sun. Mario spotted out a castle which was huge. It appeared small from there. It was surrounded by black, heavy clouds, and the aura was getting very scary and deadly as they came closer.

They finally succeeded to climb the mountain, the castle was about 2 kilometres away, but was still visible. There was much to walk. Mario was wondering how did Himank and Edmond come there daily. Perhaps, that was the reason behind they were so flexible and slim. 'Doesn't it feel weird for you as a kid to go there?' asked Mario,

‘My age is young as well as my appearance, but I’m grown mentally, physically and emotionally, sort of. And you have to be like me too, for at least one day!’ said Himank. ‘I can’t feel myself right now, a while ago, I was in Chandigarh doing mischief as I always do and now, I’m in Nimbaurs being a servant of a witch!’ said Mario. They were just about to reach when Mario noticed a huge pile of ashes. ‘H...Himank, what’s that?’ he asked, ‘As I told, Alaika turns everybody into ashes’ Himank said, ‘Unbelievable!’. They reached into Alaika’s mansion. It was huge like a palace. The gates were opened for them. Mario was afraid. They entered into a museum like hall where ashes were displayed in glass boxes showcasing Alaika’s victory on her enemies. The hall was huge, red carpet showed them the way to Alaika, as they exited the hall, a new hall came, bigger than the previous one. There, everybody else were standing in a queue. Mario and Himank joined them.

Everything was dark, there was a throne placed in middle of the hall, wood carvings were done everywhere representing Alaika’s power and victories. Suddenly, a structure came which was glowing. Mario was feeling very hot, he wanted to take off his coat but could not. The glowing thing came closer to the throne and sat on it, suddenly, the glow decreased and a part human, part fire-like-structure was visible. That was indeed Alaika.

She was slightly glowing and sitting on throne with her legs crossed. Her hair was made of flames and ashes which were flowing. She appeared tall and very gorgeous. She wore a dress made of fire and had a very

attractive ring. Mario was shocked to see her. Everybody bowed down, so did Mario. 'Well, well, where is the girl!' Alaika yelled 'Y...Your highness, please provide us a day more to search for him' one of the servants said. 'Why! You've been searching for weeks, I need her blood, I'm thirsty!' she shouted again, she seemed to be very mad. A ball of fire came from her hand and bumped into the servant, 'Aah! Your majesty please forgive me!' he shouted as he spoke his last few words and boom! He turned into ashes. This was a brief demonstration of what Alaika could do.

Mario was very frightened. 'You!' Alaika shouted out as she pointed towards Mario. Fright was burning Mario more than anything. 'I'm listening your highness,' he said as Himank taught him, 'Edmond, you're in charge of this, if you do not accomplish the task by a week, you know what will happen' she said. Edmond who was actually Mario didn't know what to say, 'I...I will not disappoint you' he said, 'Well, that's the spirit' Alaika said giving a weird and scary look. It was time to go back, Mario was behaving like a soldier in there, and when he came out, he fainted like a snake. 'M...Mario, get up! Someone will see us!' said Himank as he tried to wake him.

Mario was burning from tension, he was in a world he didn't even knew about, he was responsible for finding a girl or he will turn into ashes and he could not even run away. He walked to home thinking this, he was feeling so weak that he could not even walk properly, honestly, it looked like he was trying to do a cat walk but still was looking like a snake. Himank was trying to control his

laugh seeing him walk like that. Again, after crossing valleys, meadows and forests they reached home, where Edmond's condition was getting worse. Ishani was preparing soup for him while Vidushi was keeping an eye on Edmond. Mario slammed the door and came inside and fell on the mat. 'Edmond, please say that you're alright, I can't face her again!' he said, 'What happened?' Ishani asked, 'Well, Edmond you're responsible to find Hana' Himank said, 'Me? No!'.

'Who is Hana?' Vidushi got up and asked, 'Alaika's past life enemy. Who would even dare to stand against her now'. 'I can't go; she lives in Japan!' Edmond said as he pretended to be even more ill. 'What exactly happened there?', 'Well, I can't even think of that again. Alaika turned a man into ashes because he didn't find a girl and now, I'm responsible to find that same girl named Hana' said Mario as he got up and sat near the fireplace. 'Mario, you'll have to help me look for Hana until Edmond gets well,' said Himank as he sat with him. 'Things are splitting out of my hands'.

9.

Spies in new Delhi

‘Do you really think you can do this Mario?’ asked Edmond, ‘I have to, it’s not my choice now’ said Mario, ‘That’s the spirit bro,’ said Himank with a smile on his face, ‘Hey, I’ve seen Himank smiling for the first time!’ said Vidushi, ‘Me?’ ‘Well, that’s true, I sometimes forget to enjoy life’ said Himank as he started to open up, ‘I was wondering since long, who are your parents, Himank?’ questioned Ishani,

‘My parents?’ Himank felt a lump in his throat, ‘They don’t even know that I’m their son. They live in Thiruvananthapuram right now. Serving Alaika was in my destiny whether I like it or not, I was replaced by an orphan girl. One of Alaika’s workers adopted me. She was very nice; I used to call her ‘aunt’. Sadly, she died in an accident. I miss her. I used to live with her all time earlier; Alaika could watch me easily with her’ ‘When I turned seven, Alaika took me in Nimbaurs,’ Himank began, his voice was steady but distant. ‘She gave me a house. That was the only favour she ever did’ he said. Everyone’s eyes softened as the weight of his words sank in.

‘I’m really sorry you had to go through that,’ said Vidushi, her voice tinged with sorrow. Then, suddenly, her tone shifted. Her eyes flared with indignation. ‘But why?’ she snapped. ‘Why don’t you rise against this?’

Why do you all stay silent when you've been wronged?' 'Oh Vidushi, I also earlier thought that until I saw her,' said Mario.

'Edmond if you don't feel alright then drink the soup kept on the table and for now, we must leave' added Ishani as she totally forgot about homework, 'Mario, you're coming with me' reminded Himank, 'But what will I say to my mom! She gets upset if I don't return by 7 or give a message,'. 'Well...Maybe I can convince her,' said Vidushi, 'Really? How!' asked Mario, 'I can say her that you've been helping Ishan finishing with the work in library...' said Vidushi, 'You're good at narrating stories but Ishan has gone to Hisar for his state level basketball tournament, and Mario's mom clearly knows that,' concluded Ishani, 'Yeah, he told me...' added Edmond, 'Mario, you'd must've been known that,', Mario was looking downcast, 'He doesn't even talk to me nowadays...' he said as he remembered about their lovely friendship, three of them totally forgot to enjoy after revealing Nimbaurs.

Himank opened the notebook for Vidushi and Ishani, 'Good luck,' they both wished Mario luck for his exciting journey. 'So what?' asked Mario as he was wondering what will be their next step. 'The latest and only information we have about her is that she lives in Japan and her name is Hana' said Edmond, 'Well, we'll first go to Earth's library for searching about Japan' suggested Himank, 'Libraries are boring!' thought Mario. Edmond was sneezing so loud that Mario was getting Mini heart attacks. 'Where are we going next?' questioned Mario,

‘New Delhi,’ ‘Woah! I’ve never been to New Delhi before, but why?’, ‘Because we need to know more about Japan that how should we stay there and there is a famous foundation in Japan called Japan foundation,’ ‘We’ll first go to portals’ library and then we’ll search for a book with portals nearest to New Delhi,’ said Himank as he wore his coat, ‘Umm...Himank, I don’t study Geography at all but I can surely say that New Delhi is hot, so I don’t think you’ll be needing a coat’ Mario said recalling Nidhi mam’s few words which she said while he was having a pen fight with his friend. Himank didn’t know much about the real world, so he agreed to what Mario said, he took off his coat and blazer, he was ready to go while wearing his same black clothes and mask.

Edmond was watching all this with his sleepy eyes, they were the only organs of Edmond’s body that could work even a little bit properly, he was a little shocked to see Himank’s attire, he said ‘Well Himank, I don’t want to give conclusions but you should take Mario’s suggestion about what to wear,’. ‘Isn’t it right Mario?’ he asked, ‘I’m not good at fashion but you’re looking odd wearing this, why’re you wearing a mask?’, ‘Wearing mask will hide that I’m a spy,’ he said, ‘Umm...well, it’ll not’ said Mario giving a look, ‘You have to look casual like others, if you go out like this you’ll even seem to be even more strange,’ ‘What should I wear then?’ asked Himank as he was not interested in these fashion stuff, ‘Well, Mario can help you with that,’ said Edmond, ‘Leave that, let’s go Mario’ said Himank, ‘Sorry bro, I don’t think we should go at this hour, I better go home now, it’s been an hour’ said Mario

Vidushi reached home after telling some false statements about where Mario is to his mother, 'Oh girl! You got me so worried,' said mother as she hugged Vidushi tightly, 'Are you hungry, let me get you some food' mom went to kitchen to get Vidushi some food while Veda was looking at Vidushi suspiciously.

It was almost midnight, Veda laid down on bed, Vidushi also came and sat, it was a weird silence. Usually, all nights in V2M's room were fun until Madhav got missing. 'Hey,' called out Veda 'I want to tell you something,' 'What?' asked Vidushi as she wasn't bothered to hear, 'More than bhaiya, I... I miss you' Veda said, Vidushi was not expecting Veda to say that, 'What, why?' she said as she was still not interested in Veda's words, 'I just miss those days when we had fun, you, me, bhaiya and Sunny. Nowadays, you are just busy in hanging out with Mario and Ishani' said Veda, 'What do you guys do?'. Vidushi could not answer; she had changed a lot in past few weeks.

Meanwhile, Mario had to play the game of question and answers with his mom as he reached home very late, 'Mario, are you done with your work?' asked his mom, 'What work?' said Mario as he was blank when he remembered of Vidushi who was responsible for ensuring her that mother doesn't worry about Mario. 'Oh...that work! Y...yes,' Mario replied, he wished he knew what Vidushi had told his mom. 'Okay, why didn't you call from Edmond's phone?' she questioned, Mario somehow was trying to understand what Vidushi told, 'W...well, Edmond lives alone now, besides, his aunt

was...was out for a m...eeting and his battery was dead' he stammered 'What did Vidushi tell you?', 'She told me that Mario is at Edmond's house, he was not feeling well so you were helping him with his incomplete work' she answered, 'Oh! Well, that's very true, uh... he is sick and as Vidushi... told I was helping him' he blurted, 'Well, call from next time. I got very upset!' mom said.

Veda was still feeling suspicious about Vidushi's strange behaviour, poor Veda didn't know that Vidushi was the one who was now involved with the ones who kidnapped their brother and others. It was like sadness had taken over. Vidushi just wanted to yell loudly and bring her brother back; she was tired in this trap of Nimbaurs. She wanted to say Himank about what she thought but he already was always distressed and busy.

On the other hand, Edmond is sick. Veda was getting more and more suspicious by the minute. She woke up at midnight and decided to check Vidushi's journal. Vidushi didn't write anything personal in it, just all the homework, to do list and other important reminders. The police investigation was hitting a dead end, yet Vidushi remained unfazed. Veda possessed a tender soul—sweet, innocent, sensitive, and merciful. Her cunning nature remained hidden, never revealed to anyone. Yet, when the pursuit of truth demanded it, a sharper edge began to surface.

She could be devious if the situation called for it, and now, driven by curiosity, her mind was quietly turning calculating. She was staring her reflection in the window when she suddenly got an idea. She curled her flicks and

fixed them with a clip, same was done with rest of the hair. She was hoping to have curly hair by next morning, she fell on the bed and tried to sleep. What could be the reason of Veda curling her hair.

Next morning seemed to be rainy. Veda was the first one to get up. The first task she did in morning was check her hair. It seemed to be curly. Veda was looking so much like Vidushi now; besides, they were identical twins as well, except their hair, (Veda had straight hair while Vidushi had hair with curls). 'Vidushi, get up! It's already time for school' Yelled mom from kitchen, 'Your sister is already ready and you're not even bothering to wake up!'. Veda was sitting on dining table with her two curly plates. Mom didn't notice that. Vidushi woke up with a big yawn. It was raining, and all know that sleeping during the rain is best.

Without a single desire, Vidushi got up from bed and noticed Veda eating sandwiches for breakfast while mom was talking to inspector about Madhav. Unwantedly, she took a shower and got ready for school, no one noticed Veda's hair. Vidushi was quite observant but due to her sleepy mood, she could not even figure out where her I-card is while she was already wearing it. They walked to school. Usually, mom used to drop them to school, but she was busy today, so Veda and Vidushi went to school by walking. Let's talk about what happened with Mario, of course, he was absent because of the mission.

'Uh! My stomach hurts a lot! I'm getting fever as well mom!' he said making some excuses, 'Well, you can rest today, don't go outside. I'll be back by 8 today,' said his

mom taking her laptop bag, 'And if you don't feel well then call Vidushi's mom or directly message me' she added. Mario was now free to have a trip with Himank again,'. Mario's mom left the house; he finally now was alone. 'Hey, come to my house' messaged Mario to Himank as he swallowed some candies in one gulp. 'On my way,' replied Himank.

After a few minutes Himank was there. 'Come on, hurry up!' he said as he took out the Nimbaurs portal notebook. As you are familiar with the process, Himank and Mario touched the middle page for more than 5 seconds and Whoosh! They were in Nimbaurs, but in some kind of new place. Mario was witnessing the beauty of Nimbaurs. 'I love it...'. Himank grabbed him to a building. It was the portals' library; a guard was sitting on the entrance. He was a goblin, 'Why're you here, human-heads?' he said, Himank took out an old leaf from his pocket. It had nothing on it; it looked like a normal shed leaf. As soon as that leaf was handed to that goblin, some glowing words appeared which said 'Alaika's permit' and then disappeared.

Goblin took the leaf and kept it in his wallet kind of tote bag. They both were allowed to enter the portals' library. Mario was expecting crores of books there, but surprisingly, when they entered the hall, there were hundreds of empty racks and only five racks in front were filled with the portals' book. And, a book on a separate table was kept with the label 'back here', 'What's this?' asked Mario pointing towards that book, 'That's the portal to back here in Nimbaurs, we can carry the book

along with us wherever we go through the portals, so that we can return back here' 'And, the speciality of this book is that this book will automatically come back here after we use it, so no one misuses it' explained Himank taking a deep breath. 'Hold the return book,', Mario picked up that book, it looked like someone had not used it from centuries.

Himank was rushing to find the book when he took out the book of 'Faridabad' 'Come on Mario,' he called out, 'We're going to New Delhi, aren't we? So why is this Fadia-Faria-Faridabad with you!' exclaimed Mario, 'Because it is the closest place we have in form of portal to New Delhi' replied Himank as he hurriedly opened the book's middle page. Mario and Himank touched it and vanished into thin air. They woke up in a street behind a sweets' shop; there was crowd. They got on their toes; Mario was totally amazed so was Himank. But they were not very sure that where are they in the city, they could be in any town, any sector or any village. Himank got up and asked an old lady who was wearing a saree about where were they, the lady replied 'ਕੀ ਪਾਗਲ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ?',

Himank was totally confused about what she said, 'Hey, you said you know Punjabi, what did she say?' asked Himank, 'I'll deal with this, just watch and learn' said Mario as he stepped forward, and cleared his throat, he asked 'ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਰਸਤਾ ਗੁਆ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ, ਕੀ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਕਿਹੜੀ ਜਗ੍ਹਾ ਹੈ?' the lady was quite impressed to see the boys knowing Punjabi, she replied 'ਇਹ ਫਰੀਦਾਬਾਦ ਦਾ ਸੈਕਟਰ 21 ਹੈ' she replied with a pleasant voice. 'ਤੁਹਾਡਾ

ਧੰਨਵਾਦ ' replied Mario, both of them turned back and giggled, 'That was...awesome!' exclaimed Himank, 'What did you say?', Mario smiled and said 'First when you asked that where were we, she said 'Have you gone crazy?' then, I spoke to her and said 'We lost our way, can you give us an idea about this place?' she replied, 'This is sector 21 of Faridabad' and at last I thanked her!' 'It is brilliant to have a partner like you!' said Himank, 'Oh, that means you replaced Edmond! I'll tell him', said Mario sarcastically both of them giggled and moved further.

They caught a bus, 'Who'll pay for the ticket, we don't have money' whispered Mario, 'I've been sitting in this bus thousands of times using the same ticket' replied Himank confidently, 'Woah! You steal your own ticket from the conductor! That's crazy' said Mario, Himank passed out his 1.5-years-old ticket to the conductor and boarded on the bus. 'Phew, I am feeling hot!' said Himank as he took off his heavy coat. Himank was looking extremely odd wearing mask, a heavy coat and long boots. Mario noticed that. 'Umm...Himank, well, you shouldn't have worn that,' said Mario as he was staring at Himank, 'Oh come on! Don't be Edmond!' said Himank as he was frustrated to talk about the same topic again.

About an hour later, the bus arrived at the station. Mario and Himank were asleep, the bus honked loudly which disturbed their sleep. Himank's eyes flared open, it was 9:00 am and they were at their destination. 'Hey, Mario, wake up!' called out Himank as they were finally in New

Delhi. Mario noticed Himank eating chocolate, 'Where'd you get this from?' he asked 'I bought it while you were asleep,' said Himank, 'You had money! Why didn't you tell me!' exclaimed Mario as he took a part of chocolate and chewed it giving Himank a cute but frustrated look. They were on the bus stand and were quite confused about where to go now, 'Now what, we'll have to wait here for centuries' muttered Himank, 'Umm...well, I think I know where we have to go now,' said Mario judging Himank's attire again, he grabbed him outside the bus station where the main Market was. 'Come on,' Mario was acting like a captain when he suddenly stopped at a store, 'Nice! Puma' he spoke to himself, 'What's Puma?' asked Himank as he was not very social, 'Well, it is a clothes' brand, Vidushi's sister Veda told me about this' 'And now, we will be buying you clothes before starting the mission'. 'Oh no!' thought Himank.

Mario went inside the shop and asked 'Good Morning, may I get a pair of pants and shirt for this boy,' said Mario 'Come on...Himank,' he whispered to call out Himank who didn't seem to even bother about his clothes. Unwantedly, Himank came in, 'I might have something special for you...' the vendor said and ran somewhere to fetch him some good quality clothes, 'Why did we come here?' questioned Himank as he was in so much hurry to go, 'Relax, we're neither late for a train or any class,' said Mario as he was acting like Veda for the first time in his life. 'Here you go,' the vendor said as he brought a sky blue, chic jeans and a black shirt. That pair could look amazing at Himank if he bothered to wear it

‘Really? Um...are you sure about it?’ he stammered as he didn’t want to deny directly. ‘Yeah, this is wonderful...go try on’ Mario said as he grabbed him to the trial room. Himank was very annoyed but poor him could not even decline. After a few moments, Himank came out, looking like a handsome boy.

‘Woah! You simply look so...awesome!’ exclaimed Mario, ‘We’re buying this, how much does it cost?’ asked Mario, ‘Hmm...these costs...2340’ the vendor replied, Mario snatched Himank’s phone and made an online payment, ‘Hey!’ Himank was really frustrated ‘Don’t worry I’ll pay back’. ‘Did you just bought that for real!’ said Himank ‘I make efforts to earn money by selling special medicinal herbs found in Nimbaurs’. ‘Have you ever bothered about how you look, you should be thanking me... oh! come on!’ said Mario as he suddenly took him at a salon, ‘not again!’ that was definitely what Himank was thinking. Mario spent 290 again for Himank’s haircut.

It was nearly 10:30 when Himank and Mario were done with the fashion stuff, Himank stared at his new self in the mirror, ‘Woah! I look so...’ he muttered to himself. ‘Come on, it’s already 10:30 we have to leave’ said Mario as he now waited for Himank’s instructions. ‘Umm...well, now we will go to Japan foundation, I hope it’s not that far so we can reach there by foot’ said Himank, ‘Hey, can you tell us the way to Japan foundation?’ asked Himank as he saw a man walking past him. ‘നേരെ പോയി വലത്തേക്ക് തിരിയുക, നിങ്ങൾക്ക് അരബിനോ മാൾഗ് കാണാം, കൂടുതൽ മുന്നോട്ട് പോയാൽ നിങ്ങൾക്ക് ജപ്പാൻ ഫൗണ്ടേഷന്റെ കണ്ടെത്താൻ കഴിയും’

the man replied, 'The day is getting better and better,' muttered Himank, 'Don't worry, I know Malayalam, മലയാളം' said Mario reducing Himank's tension, 'What did he say?' asked Himank, 'He said, go straight and turn right, then we'll be on Aurobindo Marg, moving further, we'll be able to spot out Japan foundation; by the way, he spoke in Malayalam' said Mario as they continued walking.

'Well, is that Japan foundation?' asked Mario, 'Oh yes!' squealed Himank as they both went in running. There, it seemed to be a huge hall, a lady was sitting on reception and working, she found out that Mario and Himank were standing in front of her, 'Hello, how can I help you?' she asked, 'Well, we are searching for a Japanese course,' answered Himank, 'Oh, then you've reached on the perfect time!' said the lady, 'Only three seats were left'. Both of them were feeling satisfied. They booked their seats for class. After half an hour, the Japanese course started. Mario and Himank took seats, they were provided a notebook and pen, around 12-13 people were there. While Himank wanted to learn Japanese, Mario was curious about who would get the last seat, whatever, Mario started to pay attention too. After learning some basic concepts of Grammar, Himank and Mario started to frame small sentences like 'I am Himank, he is my friend, she is a girl' and other.

'Watashi wa...' Mario was practicing some sentences. Suddenly, a girl entered the room. She had pale tanned skin, long beautiful silky hair, a tall height and a pleasant smile on her face. Mario thought that she got the last seat. She sat next to Himank and stared at what he was doing,

Himank got a bit nervous, you know, things happen perfectly unless someone is watching you do tasks. Himank was spelling all the words perfectly until the girl sat next to her and stared on his sheet, Himank dropped his pen, the girl picked it for him. 'Thanks' muttered Himank, 'My pleasure, by the way, you did that wrong' said the girl, 'Oh thanks again,' said Himank based on what he knew about how to talk and socialize with people, 'What's your name?' asked the girl, 'Uh...I'm Hi...Himank' he replied 'What's your name?', 'Oh, I am Hana' the girl replied, Mario and Himank were just so shocked to hear that! Hana! Their aim! They just needed to figure out how to get her.

Mario was thinking about that, big plans were going in his mind while Himank was lost in talking with Hana, it seemed like Mario and Himank had exchanged characters, the chill Mario was busy in making plans and Himank was trying to figure out that how to talk to a girl. Himank didn't even think once about Alaika, or how to kidnap the girl. 'Are you here to learn Japanese too?' asked Himank, 'No, I'm Japanese and Japanese is my first language, I'm a tutor' Hana said, 'That's great! Are you enjoying here in India?' asked Himank, 'That's very sweet of you asking about my opinion, yeah, India is such a beautiful place, I wish never to leave!' she said, 'Wait, when are you leaving?' questioned Himank. 'Tomorrow, today is my last day here' said Hana, 'Wa...' 'Sorry to interrupt both of you but I think we've got some work to do' said Mario as he pulled Himank aside. Himank suddenly remembered of all the work, 'Oh my god! Hana! Was she that Hana we're looking for?' exclaimed Himank

as Mario took him outside, 'Yes, yes, yes, and to capture her you need to get closer to her' said Mario, 'Me! Why me?' said Himank who was nervous, 'Don't act innocent, I saw you both being friends or something else... whatever here's the plan' said Mario as he took out a notebook, it was the same notebook where he used to search for things with Vidushi and Ishani. He opened it,

Case Hana:

We found the girl Hana in Japan foundation. The plan is that Himank will distract her and bring her to a deserted alley where we will kidnap Hana.

'Woah! That's...insane' said Himank, 'Go on, it is almost 4:00, my mom will be returning at 8:00' shouted Mario, 'Are you sure?' questioned Himank, 'You're getting late, see she is going!' said Mario as he hopped up, Hana was done with the stuff so she was going to hotel for final packing. Himank ran towards her, 'Himank, I didn't expect you here,' said Hana, 'Well, I was just wandering around...hey,' 'I'm a little new in Delhi so, so... I wanted you to introduce me here' spoke up Himank finally, he couldn't believe he did that. 'Me? Uhm... I would... I'd love that' stammered Hana.

After 15 mins, Hana came in the main market, Himank who wanted and didn't want to stay with Hana was quietly waiting there 'I'll kill Mario!' he muttered as he was feeling uncomfortable, 'Hi,' called out Hana, 'Oh no!' he muttered and then he said 'Hi, I was waiting here for you only,' Himank was walking on the route Mario told him. Kidnaping another person was a heartbreak for him, first those dogs, then Lavaya, that's not enough, he even

had to hear the screams and cries of Dishita and Madhav, and now Hana. 'Is your friend coming?' asked Hana, 'Mario? no he isn't' he said.

'Are you new here?'

'Well, yes...'

'Where are you from?'

'Uhm...Nimb.... I mean Chandigarh' Himank was about to say Nimbaurs on her question

'That's great'

Himank was feeling very scared, guilty, happy, weird and nervous at the same time. What could he do, Hana was starting to like him but he wasn't sure about his feelings.

'What do you like doing?' asked Hana opening up.

'I'm fond of Martial arts, sports, painting and researching about new things'

'That is very good, do you know I'm a writer?'

'Writer?'

'Yep, I love stories! I've already published books'

'Me too! I don't do it often but I like reading'

'Reading is a very good habit,'

'What kind of stories do you write?' asked Himank as he started to open up too.

'I write all types of stories, fictional, fantasy, tales, and many more'

Himank didn't realize that he was so lost in talking with Hana, she actually was good!

It took at least 45 mins for them to reach the alley Mario told. Hana was so busy in talking that she didn't realize that Himank is taking her closer and closer to end. Those 45 mins, Hana and Himank enjoyed a lot! Finally, they arrived at the alley, smile wore-off from Himank's face, it was time for goodbyes.

Poor Hana had no idea about what's going on. Hana was feeling very happy and Himank was feeling the opposite. Mario came running from behind and covered her nose and mouth with hankie with chloroform on it, Hana screamed and cried, it was a dreadful experience for both of them, she fainted at last. Both of them took her. Mario took out the 'Back here' book. They took her to Nimbaurs along with them. Before submitting Hana to Alaika, they met for a meeting at Edmond's house.

Mario and Himank came in and kept her on the mattress. Mario started to cry, so did Himank followed by Edmond 'I was just an innocent boy, and now I've ended up as a criminal' said Mario as his nose was running, 'I started with searching for my bro Madhav and I'm now a part of kidnaping him! That's not right! I want him back, I want him!' he cried again, Himank's tears were silently falling from his eyes continuously 'Wm....where am I?' muttered Hana as she woke up, 'Himank! Who are they?' 'How did I come here!'. Edmond and Mario wiped their tears but Himank could simply not. He wanted to run away somewhere and hide from everyone. 'Hana, calm down,' said Mario, 'You....you're kidnapped,' 'What! I'm not a

baby whom you can kidnap, why! Himank, how can you do this to me?' she was feeling out of the blue, three of them were heartbroken, especially Mario, this was his first time.

'I think you should go' said Edmond trying to be cold, Mario who had no option, got up and looked forward to Himank, 'No... please! Leave me,' wailed Hana, Himank stood up and made Hana smell chloroform again, they took her to Alaika. All the way they were sobbing, wailing and crying. What could they do! 'I'm sorry...' muttered Himank the last time before entering Alaika's palace. The aura became dark. They entered, Hana was awake, she was shouting and screaming. All the workers stood in a file waiting for Alaika. Let's take a break and see what had happened the whole day with Veda and Vidushi.

Dressed like Vidushi, Veda was ready to hop to school. Both of them did so. Off course, Mario and Edmond had not come. The day went normal at first, interesting part comes in the lunch break. Veda who was looking like Vidushi, pretended to be like Vidushi and sat with Ishani, unfortunately Ishani didn't realize that it was Veda. Vidushi actually was appointed to be in charge of the district chess and football tournament so she was in the ground for the whole recess. 'Hi Ishani,' said Veda who was pretending to be Vidushi to know what's happening, 'Hi, I'm really worried about Mario and Himank' said Ishani, wondering about who is Himank, Veda asked 'Where is Mario by the way?' 'New Delhi of course, don't you know' 'And why're you worried about him?', Ishani took a deep breath and said 'This is Mario's first mission,

I'm not sure whether he'll be able to handle or not' Veda was really puzzled, after a while Vidushi came there. She hurriedly took her bottle and came to Ishani 'Hey, Ishani I was.....' 'Veda?' exclaimed Vidushi between her mid-sentence as she saw Veda sitting there, 'Wait, are you Vidushi, then you? Veda!' exclaimed Ishani as she got really disappointed. 'How dare you pretend to be me!' shouted Vidushi in anger,

'Because you are not telling me the truth!' yelled Veda

'Such a gangster you are, the truth is that I'm tired of you,' shouted back Vidushi

'No, the truth is that you hate me! You never loved Bhaiya or me; you are always so unbothered' Veda said knowing that what she spoke wasn't true, but couldn't help herself with losing temper.

'So, what do you want? To create an emotional drama movie!'

'No, you act so unbothered, you've completely changed. You don't talk to me or mom, always busy with Ishani and Mario'

'Everything has changed except you, I'm busy doing things' Vidushi muttered in a low but aggressive tone

'Things like what!'

'Why do you care...'

'That's only the problem, if I try to figure out, you will shout on me and I'll never know the truth' Veda finally confessed her feelings

‘You don’t get it; somethings are better as secrets’

‘I get it very well; you’re getting mature and are having anger issues’

‘No!’ yelled Vidushi

‘That’s true that somethings are better if not told, but secrets between us! We used to be best buddies, but you don’t care now’ Veda spoke. Hearing this, Vidushi’s heart cold heart melted for a moment. She thought about her time with her siblings and realized that she has changes a lot and is not paying attention to her family.

‘That’s actually...right, I’m....I’m sorry’ said Vidushi after pausing for a while.

‘Forgiven,’ Veda said as she just wanted to ensure that Vidushi remembers of her family.

Both the sisters hugged each other tightly, that was a heart touching moment.

10.

Raising ourselves

Present in Alaika's Hall, all suddenly felt heat. A lightning body came closer and closer and sat on the throne, the light reduced and now a face was visible, a malicious lady was sitting there gazing at Hana. 'Well done! Well done my citizens,' she said. Hana's blood ran cold; she was quacking in her shoes. Himank and Mario were feeling down in the mouth and their hearts laid in the depth of despair. She curled her fingers towards herself and Hana came closer to her; she got on her feet and gripped Hana's neck tightly. Hana was struggling for breath; she could not breathe properly, Mario wanted to shout out 'Stop!' but he was frightened out of his wits.

Himank on the other hand was willing to do the same, first time, he wasn't scared of Alaika, his voice was stuck in his throat, Alaika opened her mouth to bite Hana with her sharp fangs, Hana was feeling like taking her last few breaths, she felt like she had one foot on grave.

'No, no!' muttered Himank as he started to feel the pain of all the people who were in Alaika's prison, even those innocent dogs. Lavaya, he was just an 8-year-old young boy, who was forcefully grabbed in pain, but poor him said nothing. Dishita, a girl witnessing pain and violence at such a young age but was still acting brave. Madhav, a lovely boy who suffered a lot but complained about nothing and now Hana, a girl with a soft heart who was

tricked and now will be suffering too. Struggling to get out of Alaika's grip, Hana was trying hard to save herself, Himank was feeling disappointed, fuming, miserable and mad at himself. He formed a tight grip with his hands, he raised his hand upwards to shout and say Alaika to stop when his emotions, his fury turned into a magical force and pulled Hana closer to her, it was like magic! 'What! Who is doing that!' shouted Alaika in annoyance, it actually was Himank.

An unknown skill which is known as 'Telacrips' had been introduced by saints long back, when you have a feeling of fury, guilt, and disappointment for someone else, you get a magical ability known as Telacrips which can help you stop that action, Telacrips is earned and it is an ability which is unstoppable. This ability is somewhat like air bending. Himank didn't know that; he just knew that he saved Hana. Hana who was feeling terrified, stuck with Mario who was shocked to see such magic.

'Who did this!' shouted Alaika in anger, everyone was shivering. Himank just discovered an ability in himself which eventually was stronger than Alaika. Alaika again curled her fingers towards herself to get Hana, but due to his ability, Himank had held Hana with a tight magical grip so Hana wasn't moving.

Alaika got annoyed, she got on her toes, and herself came closer to Hana, this time, Himank pulled her back and made her go far away from the palace. 'Aah! Who is this girl, get her to me!' said Alaika in a low-pitched terrifying voice. Himank and Mario were satisfied; a few workers ran to get Hana, Mario and Himank also did. Himank

somewhat knew that where can Hana possibly be. He ran in straight wards direction, 'Hey look, does this jewellery belong to Hana?' asked Mario, 'Yes! She said that her aunt gifted her this earring' said Himank who was certain about where is she. Mario and Himank were trying to find Hana, 'Aah!' they heard a scream coming from bushes, Himank went closer to check, Hana came out of the bushes and beat a hasty retreat,

'Wait! Hana, Hana!' called out Mario, they ran after her. Finally, Hana stopped at the stream near Himank's house, she was feeling frightened, Mario caught her, 'Don't be scared, we'll not harm you' said Himank who came running, 'You're telling me to not be scared? So, who were the ones who tricked me and brought me to this weird place!' Hana yelled, 'Come with us,'. Himank took Hana and Mario to his house, 'Where am I?' questioned Hana, 'You are in....you are in....Nimbaurs'. 'Wait, what's that?' 'Nimbaurs is a magical land where...' Mario was speaking when one of Alaika's workers came in and said 'Himank, the girl is..... she is with you!' the worker exclaimed, 'Come on, the girl is here!'. Himank was getting furious, 'Sunny, husky... Lavaya....Dishita, Madhav....Hana' all these names were echoing in Himank's head.

He gripped his hands as he was feeling livid. He raised his hands and the anger which turned a magical force blew off all the workers, Smash! They all smashed in the bushes, Mario and Himank, followed by Hana rushed to Edmond's house for getting back to Chandigarh. 'Catch them!' said one of them, Himank became the hero of that

day. His fury again turned to a powerful magical force, 'Aaaaaahhh!' he screamed as 'Telacrips' was consuming his power, he again blew of all the soldiers, his power was at such a high range that it tired him so much that he could not even stand up, after applying his all energy on Telacrips, Himank fainted. It even made Hana more scared, Mario was now responsible for handling both Hana and Himank, he tried to pick up Himank but he was really heavy, he took Himank and Hana safely to Edmond's house. 'Edmond... look at Himank,' 'What happened to him?' asked Edmond whose condition was already deadly. 'He did some magic and saved Hana!' said Mario, 'Our lives are at stake, I need the notebook, we've to get back there'.

Edmond rushed to find the notebook while Hana was staring at them, 'Where are we going? Why do you need a notebook for that.....and what's wrong with Himank?' asked Hana who was terrified, 'Don't worry you're safe, I'll explain you the stuff later on,' said Mario. Honestly, Mario had shouldered his responsibilities, and had become trustworthy and a courageous boy comparing to how he earlier was. 'Gimmie you hand,' said Mario to Hana as they were about to leave, he held Himank's hand who was unconscious.

Whoosh! And they were back to Chandigarh. 'Whoa! What was that? Where have we ended up and...how?' exclaimed Hana who was getting easy with Mario and Himank. 'I'll explain everything to you, but first we need to see Himank,' said Mario who was in a hurry, they got out of the park, 'Mario! I didn't expect you here, how was

the day and...' said Ishani who walking in the park with Vidushi, 'Who is she? And...what's wrong with Himank!' Vidushi was shocked to see Himank, so was Ishani, 'She is Hana, there is no time to explain....Ishani, you take care of Hana, Vidushi and I will take Himank to home' commanded Mario, Vidushi and Mario ran to Mario's house while Ishani was trying to comfort Hana. 'Mom! Mom, see him,' shouted Mario who had held Himank on his back to the way home followed by Vidushi. 'Who is he? Bring him here,' mother said.

Mario made Himank lay down on bed, Himank gasped, he hardly was breathing. 'He is our friend, he got unconscious...' explained Vidushi, 'Oh dear! His condition is horrible' exclaimed Mario's mother who brought a wet cloth for him, 'We need to take him to hospital immediately' said mother as she picked up Himank like he was his own son. 'Come on both of you, what're you waiting for' she called. Three of them took Himank to hospital. After checking Himank for a while Mario and Vidushi heard doctor talking to Mario's mother

Doctor: Boy is suffering a very rare disease; we haven't yet figured out which.

Mario's mom: Will he be alright?

Doctor: I can't say anything, lab tests are going on... how did he exactly faint?

Mario's mom: I'll call kids, Mario....Vidushi, we need to have a word

Mario and Vidushi came there, they were worried about Himank

Doctor: What did exactly happen that made your friend get unconscious?

‘Ugh...he...he’ stammered Mario as he kept his lips sealed, as far Vidushi was aware, she somehow made sense of what collapsed Himank, she said ‘Well, he was...he had emotional stress...I guess’. What they told didn’t seem to be relevant to the doctor. He just wandered off. ‘Where are his parents, I need to call them’ said mother, ‘He... he is orphan, he lives alone’ said Mario who was out of his depth, mom was a little puzzled she already found Mario’s friends a bit weird.

Vidushi and Mario went outside, ‘What happened to Himank? How was the day? I need all details’ said Vidushi, ‘This day was the best and the worst day of my life!’ said Mario, ‘What happened?’, ‘Phew! We went to Japan foundation, there, we met Hana. Hana and Himank became friends and grew close, but she was our victim. Himank distracted Hana meanwhile I captured her. It was a dreadful experience. We took her to Edmond’s house. We all whimpered a lot, then it was time to go to Alaika, we had to go. Alaika was about to get Hana when Himank did some magic. He blew off everyone, just like....just like a super hero movie and then he got unconscious’ explained Mario in one go,

‘Woah! I get it now,’ exclaimed Vidushi, ‘I’m worried about Edmond and Himank, both are very sick’ muttered Mario, ‘Me too, but most importantly, I’m worried about you!’ said Vidushi, ‘Me, why?’ ‘They both cannot go to

Alaika, so all what happened today will be blamed on you!’ whispered Vidushi, ‘Oh really! I was mental-minded until yesterday and now, you’re worried about me?’ said Mario in sarcasm, Vidushi giggled, ‘How was your day?’ asked Mario, ‘That’s not important,’ said Vidushi, ‘So when did I say it is, I just want to know if something unusual happened’ said Mario, many things had changed except Mario and Vidushi trying to tease each other.

‘Where am I?’ asked Hana, ‘You’re in Chandigarh’ said Ishani who was curious to know what had happened in Nimbaurs, ‘How did I come here?’ asked Hana, ‘Okay, there is notebook of Nimbaurs and if you open the middle page of it and touch it for more than 5 seconds you can teleport to Nimbaurs, same can happen with any other book of a particular place. The evil demon of Nimbaurs who calls herself as the ruler wants you....because you were her enemy in past life. She needs enemy’s blood to be immortal; no one dares to fight against her now so she is collecting past life enemies’ blurted Ishani.

‘Okay, that sounds like a story but I believe in it because I’ve seen her with my bare eyes!’ said Hana, ‘By the way, who’re you?’ ‘I’m Ishani Tripathi, call me Ishani’ she said. ‘Okay so Ai-sh-anee,’ Hana said... ‘It’s not Ai-sh-anee, I’m Ishani Ish-an-i’ said Ishani who got frustrated to see Hana mispronounce her name. ‘Okay, so Ish-an-i where is...Himank?’ questioned Hana, ‘Himank....he is....he is with Mario and Vidushi’ Blurted Ishani. Hana was just wandering around wondering that where had she come, why has she come and how will she go back. The main

thing which was worrying Hana was that tomorrow was her flight to Japan and she was stuck in this scene.

On the other hand, doctors were failing to figure out what had happened to Himank, they could simply provide him medication. Himank just needed some herbs that specially grew in Nimbaurs. Everyone had changed after incidents in Nimbaurs, especially Mario. The other day, Ishani, Vidushi and Mario along with Hana visited Edmond to talk about what had happened.

‘Come on, he lives here,’ said Ishani as she moved further showing them Hana the way to Edmond’s house. ‘Hey Edmond...’ Vidushi had just opened the door when they saw everything scattered around and Edmond wasn’t there; something definitely had been unusual.

‘Where is he?’ said Mario as he opened the door to find Edmond missing

‘Not even here,’

‘Something bad might have happened’

‘If he is with Alaika then we all are in danger,’ said Vidushi

‘Don’t worry, maybe he just forgot to notify us,’ Ishani said trying to be optimistic

‘That’s possible unless you see the condition of this house’

‘I am going to Alaika’s’ Mario said

‘Really, then I’m also coming with you’ Ishani added

‘You can’t’

‘She will, I’ll be here with Hana trying to figure out the herbs which can heal Himank’ Vidushi said

‘Are you sure? Be safe.... And Ishani, you just have to do what I do’ Mario said

‘Sure’

Mario and Ishani left for Alaika’s palace. Vidushi who was wandering around to collect some herbs was being stared by Hana. ‘What’re you doing?’ she asked, ‘I’m collecting some herbs that can heal Himank’ said Vidushi, ‘Doctors are already taking care of him’ added Hana, ‘According to what Mario told me, Himank fainted due to exhaustion, so these herbs can help him... by the fact, do you know the herbs and plants found in Nimbaurs cannot be found anywhere else in the world’ said Vidushi as she walked inside Edmond’s house as she was done with the collection. Like she did earlier with Ishani, she took a bowl and poured some water in it and added herbs. The herbs glowed and then turned into a purple substance which formed a magical potion for Himank, Vidushi collected it in bottle. Hana was just so fascinated to see this, Nimbaurs was just like dreams that escaped to reality except Alaika ruling it.

Meanwhile, Ishani had covered herself with a black cloth. ‘Hurry up,’ called out Mario as he was walking very fast, ‘If you say that thing once more, I will actually push you down this hill’ said Ishani who was annoyed by Mario for picking her constantly, Mario giggled. Ishani could see the coniferous forest and spot Alaika’s palace not much far. They both rushed to reach there. Quietly, they entered the hall, ‘Oh my god!’ muttered Ishani seeing the piles of

ashes. They quickly entered the main hall and lined up with others. Alaika wasn't there, Edmond was laying on the floor, he was bleeding and had serious injuries on his head, leg and arms. He was breathing heavily, seeing Ishani and Mario gave him some hope. Ishani's heart melted to see Edmond in such condition, Mario was feeling the same.

He somehow knew why Edmond is in such a condition. Just like always, all of them started to feel hot, a glowing body appeared in front of them. That body was made of fire, yes, she was Alaika. Ishani's heartbeat was running faster than a Cheetah. She was feeling frightened. 'Edmond...' said Alaika 'Yes...your...your highness' said Edmond in a frail voice, 'I came to know that you caught the girl and she escaped...' added Alaika in a soft but scary voice, 'Then why! Why did she escape and how!' snapped Alaika which gave Ishani a mini-heart attack. Edmond didn't reply, she curled her fingers towards herself and Edmond started to come closer to her.

She gripped Edmond's chest and whispered in her ear 'I want the girl or you'll find your aunt and yourself dead' 'I'll...I'll get her' muttered Edmond. Alaika left him, Edmond was laying in Alaika's feet, trying to stand up but could not. 'And along with that girl, I also want another girl named Vidushi!' she announced. Mario, Ishani and Edmond were shocked, how could they sacrifice Vidushi, of course they could not! They were petrified, what could they do, where could they hide, every single thing stressed a lot. 'I want both the girls by 2 days, otherwise you all will turn into ashes!' shouted

Alaika. 'Noo!' muttered Ishani as she was starting to get sick because of fright. Alaika vanished into thin air, while, Ishani and Mario ran to Edmond who was badly injured. 'Are you alright?' asked Mario worriedly, 'Y....y...yes...' Edmond said. They both assisted Edmond to get on his feet and the uplifted him on their shoulders. They hurried to reach home. By the time they were reaching, they were wondering about Vidushi. 'Are we really going to sacrifice Vidushi' questioned Ishani, 'I...I don't know' said Mario who was upset. 'Should we tell her?' asked Ishani again, after pondering for a while, Mario replied with a clear and bold 'No,'.

'Oh! What happened to Edmond?' exclaimed Vidushi as she saw both of them coming along with Edmond who is badly injured. 'He was warned by Alaika, we need Hana' said Ishani, 'That's bad, I wonder who will be the next one' said Vidushi, Mario and Ishani looked at each other after listening Vidushi say that. 'Don't worry, we have special medicines in Nimbaurs, nothing will happen to him' said Mario, 'Ishani, can you go and collect some herbs?'. Ishani went outside to look for special herbs with medicinal properties. 'So, what will you do now?' asked Vidushi 'I don't know, I wish Himank was here and Edmond was alright, I can't handle this anymore' Mario gasped. Vidushi said nothing. 'Are you going to give me to that evil witch?' asked Hana as she heard them talking, 'Don't worry' ensured Vidushi.

'Here you go,' said Ishani as she came up with some herbs. Mario crushed those leaves which made a paste, he added it into water just like Himank taught. He poured it

into a bowl and made Edmond drink it, it slowly started to heal his injuries just like **Magic!** Edmond slowly woke up. 'Uh! Mario! Ishani! Vidushi! Thank God I'm alive' Edmond said as he got conscious. 'Now what, will we submit Hana to Alaika?' asked Mario, 'No, we'll definitely not' pledged Edmond, 'We'll no longer obey Alaika, that's enough and enough is enough!' he added. 'Have you gone crazy? She'll kill us' said Mario, Edmond got mad, he got up and said 'So what! I wonder why I didn't listen to Vidushi earlier. How can we be so mean that we let others' life go for ours!', 'I agree with Edmond' concluded Vidushi, 'No! You haven't seen that how scary is she, she'll kill you' said Mario, 'So what! My brother and my beloved Sunny are with her, that's actually true, enough is enough' said Vidushi as she started to sob remembering Madhav and Sunny, 'She'll kill you!' repeated Mario, 'It doesn't matter to me anymore' shouted Vidushi as she stepped forward, 'But it matters to me! You're our best friend, even if you won't be our friend I would not let your life get in danger' said Ishani, there was a weird silence, Ishani and Vidushi hugged each other tightly, 'I still don't agree with you,' said Vidushi, 'Why!' questioned Mario as he was frustrated by Vidushi's stubbornness.

'Imagine if it would be you to lose your dad, it would be you to lose your pet, it would be you to lose your brother and see your whole family crying, just imagine that! I've made my family disappointed nowadays, do you guys even know how much mom cries every day, imagine if it would be your mom! I used to be the most chill girl and now I've so much to hide!' shouted Vidushi.

Everyone got silent, Hana was simply staring at them, 'I'm sorry, I get it now' said Mario as he felt the pain from heart. 'So, what will you do to stop Alaika?' questioned Mario as he finally agreed. 'We...have to build an army against her' said Edmond, 'An army!' exclaimed Ishani, 'Yeah, that's the best option'. 'So how will we build an army?' questioned Mario, 'Alaika is stronger than she looks, we have to encourage all the other citizens of Nimbours for that first,' said Edmond, 'But still it will not form an army which is strong enough to face even 10 of Alaika's servants' added Vidushi, everyone started to think deeply, when Hana finally opened her mouth to speak something

'Maybe, I can help you with that...' she said. 'Really, how?', 'Hypnotizing. I've learnt the skill to hypnotize people, first I'll give them some potion which will make their brain weaker for a while, then I can easily hypnotize them to listen to you guys and do what you say,' explained Hana as she was looking if they would find her idea interesting. 'That's great' said Edmond, 'Can you hypnotize Ishani for a while?' 'Me! Why?' said Ishani looking at Edmond with small eyes, 'Ishani look here,' Hana made Ishani look into her eyes, 'Say 1...2...3...' '1...2...3...' repeated Ishani after Hana as she was almost hypnotized, 'I...am...a...fool' 'I...am...a...fool' she continued saying after Hana, 'I am a fool' Ishani started to repeat the same thing again and again. Edmond laughed so did Mario, Vidushi giggled, 'That was the nicest hypnotize I ever saw' said Mario, 'Of course, 'I am a fool...' Edmond giggled. Hana clapped twice and Ishani was back to normal.

‘Uh...what just happened?’ asked Ishani, ‘You said the universal truth for first time in life’ said Mario, ‘Really?’ questioned Ishani again looking up to Edmond and Vidushi, Vidushi had a long smile on her face which was trying to control her laugh, ‘That’s right,’ said Edmond, ‘What-what did I say?’ questioned Ishani as she gasped, ‘You said what you are,’ said Vidushi, Mario chuckled again. ‘You said that you are a fool’ Hana said as she chuckled too. ‘Now you are also taking their side!’ said Ishani as she looked at Hana with big eyes. ‘Well, that was good Hana,’ commented Edmond, ‘Thanks’. ‘That will be very helpful Edmond!’ said Mario as he was amazed. ‘Surely it will be, but what about Himank?’, ‘Well, Mario and I can go to meet him, I prepared a potion for him as well’ said Vidushi, ‘Uhm... I would like to go with Ishani’ said Mario as he knew that Vidushi was the next victim and she had to be kept safe. ‘Oh-kay’ said Vidushi as she felt weird.

Mario and Ishani went to meet Himank who was admitted in hospital. He was badly injured. ‘Oh-uh, good evening, may we see Himank?’ said Ishani as she bumped her head with a doctor, ‘Sure,’ the doctor guided way to Himank’s room. Himank was laying there; he was still unconscious. Mario and Ishani waited for the doctors to exit. They took out the container in which they had kept the potion as soon as the doctors went out. ‘Feed him,’ said Mario as he opened the container and handed it to Ishani, Mario held Himank’s mouth open and Ishani poured it and fed him the potion.

After a few minutes, Himank was not fully recovered but was feeling a thousand times better. 'Uh-uh...um...Alaika! Hana! Where am I?' Himank panicked as he woke up. 'Everything is alright Himank,' 'Hana is safe, so are everyone' they ensured, Himank got back to normal he gasped, 'But for how long! For how long you guys will be safe' he protested. 'We've planned to rise against Alaika' said Ishani, 'What! Have you guys gone crazy? How you can do that, she is very powerful' exclaimed Himank, 'She wants Vidushi' said Mario hurriedly, everything and everyone became silent.

'R-really? Uhm...how will we do that'. 'Hana has an ability to hypnotize people, she can hypnotize the people of our world to fight against Alaika and then we'll have more members' explained Ishani, three of them went to Nimbours at Edmond's place where an argument was going on between Edmond and Vidushi, 'Guys! Calm down, what happened?' said Himank as he saw them fighting.

'She was crying earlier for fighting against Alaika and now she is saying that we should not' grumbled Edmond

'I'm just saying that the way to form an army isn't fair,' said Vidushi

'Why!'

'Innocent people might die' Vidushi responded

'People dying in war is a usual thing'

'People dying in a war is a usual thing when they are willing to fight! They won't even know anything!'

‘Okay, so you tell me how else we can build an army’ Edmond said lowering his voice as he came near Vidushi and glared at her.

‘Uh-um by.... We can-we can...’ she blurted

‘See, you don’t know how to build an army and you want to change the best and only plan!’ Edmond grumbled again as he looked at everybody else.

‘Calm down! Vidushi is very much right but Edmond’s point is also not wrong,’ said Ishani

‘So, what we can do?’ Mario spoke up.

With many injuries on his body and a bleeding foot, Himank was just staring at them. ‘All of you shut up! Let Himank speak,’ said Ishani, ‘Uh-uhm, what plan you guys decided?’ questioned Himank, ‘We decided that Hana can hypnotize people of Earth to follow us and we can fight against Alaika by forming an army,’ ‘Woah! You guys have formed plans to fight with Alaika while I was rotting in hospital!’ Himank was just a little shocked to see them deciding to fight against Alaika.

‘Yup, now guide us that how can we gather people’ said Mario as he was waiting for Himank’s instruction. ‘Uh-okay, Hana said that she can hypnotize people, so-uhm,’ he was confused for a while, just then an idea lightened up his mind ‘Alaika has approximately 250 members and there are around 80-90 people who are against Alaika’s rule in Nimbaurs’ explained Himank, ‘What are you trying to say?’ ‘I mean, we can convince those people to fight against Alaika and we might have enough power so we can bring a few people to Hana and she can hypnotize

them and make them our member' said Himank, 'You are a genius!' said Mario as he was pleased to hear the plan, 'but how will we fight?' questioned Vidushi, 'With arrows, swords and some other magical weapons in Nimbaurs,' said Edmond, 'What happened?' asked Mario as he looked at Ishani, 'Well, we've formed plans but I'm not sure if we can walk the talk,' said Ishani, 'I also feel the same from some corner,' added Edmond, 'We can do it!' pledged Vidushi trying to encourage them, 'Yes, we can do it!' concluded Mario. 'We've to go home as well,' said Ishani, 'Maybe you can stay here, until the war is finished' said Himank, 'Our parents will be worried about us' said Ishani, 'They will be even more relieved to see us with the lost children,' said Vidushi thinking of Madhav and Sunny. 'So will we be considered as lost until the fight ends?' asked Mario, 'Yeah,'.

11.

Beginning

'We have to hurry, all of us are in danger especially Hana and Vidushi,' said Edmond, 'I know that Hana is in danger but why me!' exclaimed Vidushi, 'Uh-uhm... nothing,' said Mario giving a glared look to Edmond, 'Tell me straight away,' said Vidushi in a sharp voice. Mario got a bit nervous to tell Vidushi about this, so did Ishani. 'Uh-uhm...well, Alaika wants you as well,' blurted Mario, 'Me! What? Why!' Vidushi was shocked to hear that; she didn't expect that. Vidushi got scared stiff, 'Why didn't you tell me earlier!' she shouted, 'OMG, I can be in a great danger' she muttered to herself. Vidushi got cold feet to hear that Alaika wants her. She thought that they didn't tell her about this because they wanted to trap and kidnap her.

Thinking the same, she beat a hasty retreat to save herself, while they didn't even have a desire to even touch her. 'Why did you tell her!' shouted Mario at Edmond, 'There is no time for arguments, go get her!' said Himank as he ran after Vidushi. Vidushi was an athlete, so of course, she ran fast. She ran and reached a bushy and thorny part of the Nimbaurs' forest. Vidushi was breathing heavily. She finally stopped. She gasped and looked around, 'Oh no! Where am I!' she said as she had dug herself a grave. 'How'll I get back,' the same thought was bothering Vidushi again and again. She took a step forward, and fell down. Her clothes got stuck into the thorny bushes. As

she fell, she got a wound and a thorn stuck in her foot and started to bleed, 'Ahh!' she screamed in pain. She tried and took out the big thorn which was hurting her.

She gasped and tried to get up, her clothes were stuck in the bushes, no matter how hard she tried, they didn't come out. Vidushi had no other option except tearing her clothes. She ripped them and a portion of her light blue t-shirt remained in the bushes. Vidushi had no idea what to do and where to go when she saw a snake which was just next to her. She screamed and ran.

On the other hand, Mario, Edmond, Himank, Ishani and Hana were looking for Vidushi. 'Vidushi!' 'Vidushi!' they called out but unfortunately, no reply came. 'This is all because of you!' said Ishani blaming Edmond, 'Oh really! Who was the one to decide not to tell her about it,' said Edmond, 'Shut up both of you!' interfered Mario. 'Don't try to be the boss, you only told her about that' said Ishani as she was really mad and worried about Vidushi. 'All of you shut up!' shouted Himank and there was a silence. 'Our friend is missing and you guys are arguing, do you even know she can be in great danger!' said Himank as he got mad.

'I think she went there,' said Hana, 'Because the grass here seems to be strewn while the other grass is flat and normal, she might have ran here'. 'That's very smart of you' complimented Himank in a soft and polite voice, 'Come on, this way!' he instructed to three of them as the tone of his voice snapped. Ishani, Mario and Edmond glared at each other and followed Himank. There were no signs of where Vidushi could have been. Gentle rain

started and the breeze touched their face. They moved further.

Vidushi tried to recall the way back; she went to east. There were no chances of them being there. Rain made her drenched. A chill went down her spine and she was chilled to the bone as she started feeling numb. Heavy rain made her fully drenched. She went under a tall tree to protect herself. She noticed a half-giant coming towards her. She picked up a long wood stick to defend herself. 'Hey!' that half-giant shouted as he saw Vidushi. He came closer to her, Vidushi got frightened and raised her stick, the 10 feet tall half-giant laughed and said 'What do you think you'll scare me from this?'. He broke that twig and gripped Vidushi's hand tightly,

'What's your name girl?' he said in a scary voice. Vidushi didn't reply, 'What's your name!' he shouted again. 'V-Vidushi' she replied in a soft voice. That half-giant cackled with a malicious glee and took Vidushi with him. Vidushi was very frightened; she didn't know what to do. As they moved further, Mario spotted some clothes stuck in bushes. 'See,' he called out as everyone gathered around him, 'This is Vidushi's piece of cloth'. 'Oh my god! See!' said Ishani as she pointed towards blood. 'Oh no! What could have happened to her,' muttered Edmond.

'Himank, where is she? Will we be able to find her?' questioned Mario as he was a bundle of nerves, at his wits' end. Ishani was also shaking like a leaf worrying for Vidushi. 'Don't worry,' ensured Himank. All of them were drenched. They were on the route to Alaika's palace. A man came who was half human and half tiger. Edmond

asked Hana, Ishani and Mario to hide. 'What are you waiting for?' he asked in a scary and grumpy voice, which made Hana scared. 'Uh-we were just wandering,' said Edmond with a weird smile. 'You both better be at Alaika's Hall right now,' that tiger-human said again and went on. 'We've to go to Alaika's,' said Himank. 'You three better stay here,' advised Edmond.

Himank and Edmond moved to Alaika's palace which wasn't further. They climbed a hill and crossed a small distance. It was the route to Alaika's palace from the backside. They reached in there and stood beside each other. Alaika came in and sat on her throne. Himank gulped. 'Your majesty, here is your victim' said the same half-giant as he entered the hall. Alaika gave a malicious smile. Vidushi was very afraid; she thought that everything was about to end now. Alaika curled her fingers and brought Vidushi closer to her. She stood up. Edmond and Himank were petrified; it made their blood run cold to see Vidushi.

They prayed for her. 'Himank, as Mario told why can't you use your magic again to save her?' whispered Edmond when he noticed that fury was already burning Himank. He was breathing very heavily. Himank was trying to create that magical force in him but could not. Alaika gripped Vidushi's neck. 'You, my greatest enemy!' Alaika spoke in a soft voice to Vidushi. 'I was your enemy.....I am your enemy....and....I'll always be your enemy' muttered Vidushi in a soft and frail voice. Alaika opened her mouth and her sharp fangs were ready to suck Vidushi's blood.

She bit Vidushi with her fangs to suck her blood in her neck. Vidushi whimpered and screamed loudly. Edmond could not see that; he took his eyes-off as he felt the pain. Mario heard Vidushi's voice, so did Ishani and Hana, Mario ran to Alaika's palace. He didn't think about a single thing before running. Mario was very much into her. One drop...two drops...and more! Vidushi's blood was sucked by Alaika. Even a handful amount of Vidushi's blood made her very young and strong. Alaika usually drank a little blood at once so it keeps the victim alive which will cause them more pain and will benefit her as it saves a lot of blood.

Alaika got very greedy about Vidushi's blood this time. She looked at herself, blood was supposed to make her immortal, but Vidushi's blood made her younger and stronger. She was about to suck more of her blood when Mario came inside. 'Stop!' he shouted. 'Don't even dare to touch her again!'. 'You've hurt me a lot! First, Sunny then Madhav and now Vidushi,' 'Enough!' Mario lost his temper. Alaika was surprised to see someone daring to say her that. Listening to Mario's words, Himank's mind got a support to form Telacrips again. He was able to use his Telacrips now. Alaika left Vidushi. She stared at Mario and went closer to him. 'Kill him!' she instructed as all the servants ran to catch and kill Mario.

Himank raised his hand in anger and blew off all of them who tried to harm Mario. Alaika was really livid now; she let out fire come from her hand and kill Himank and Mario. As mentioned earlier, Telacrips was unstoppable. Himank used his magical force to stop Alaika's fire force

from harming them. When both the magical forces of Alaika and Himank met, it created a great disaster. There was a huge bang! And all the lions, wolves, servants who were trying to harm them blew off. During this, Edmond quietly went to Vidushi and took her outside. Vidushi was badly injured. There were no medicinal herbs around that could heal her.

Luckily, Edmond had a potion which he had saved for himself. He used it to heal Vidushi. Still, the marks of Alaika's fangs were not healed properly. 'Vidushi, are you alright?' 'Yes, I'm fine' said Vidushi in a frail voice. Edmond helped Vidushi to get up. 'What's going inside?' asked Vidushi, 'Himank will handle everything, come with me'. Edmond took Vidushi to a cave. 'War is about to start, consider as if it's already started, we have to collect the weapons' said Edmond. 'Come on, we should hurry up!' said Vidushi. They went inside the cave. It was very cool and dark there. Drawings were made on walls of the cave.

They went further. There was a magical barrier which was stopping them, 'How should we cross it?' asked Vidushi as she touched the barrier and felt current. 'I-I don't know,' said Edmond. Vidushi suddenly remembered something. The barrier was made by current. And you don't get an electric shock unless you are touching ground. 'Edmond!' she said as she got an idea, 'This barrier is made of current, right? And we don't feel it if we are in air,' she explained 'So, we can glide through the barrier which will make it easy for us to get through'. 'You're genius! Let me try,'. Edmond took a few

steps back and then went running and he glided through the barrier with a long jump. And he was finally on the other side! Vidushi came too. There, they found out many swords, arrows, bows, spears.

‘Woah!’ Vidushi was amazed to see this all. There was a statue just behind a precious big sword which was covered by climbers and tendrils of plants and dust. Edmond took off the twigs and dust and they could see a statue of an old man holding a sword. Edmond saw him and bowed down, so did Vidushi trying to copy Edmond. ‘May your soul rest in peace,’ he muttered ‘It has been a difficult time for Nimbaurs, please allow me to use your sword,’ he said to the statue and respectfully took the sword, ‘Who is he?’ asked Vidushi as they both got up, ‘He was the ruler of Nimbaurs, King Arthur, a perfect example of wisdom, bravery and justice,’ said Edmond. An arrow and a bow came floating towards Vidushi. ‘W-What’s this?’, ‘This is the gift for you from Nimbaurs,’ said a voice.

It was king Arthur’s soul who appeared in front of them floating. They both bowed to respect him, ‘Vidushi, this is meant for you, accept it’ said King Arthur. ‘Thanks, your-your majesty,’ said Vidushi, ‘And Edmond, a perfect example of sacrifice and bravery, this is for you’ King Arthur said again handing over a sword to him, Edmond thanked him. ‘Your highness, if you don’t mind, may I ask you that why you said that it was meant for me?’ asked Vidushi, King Arthur gently laughed, ‘Dear one, it was written in the stars even before your birth. Everything is inevitable, Alaika ruling the kingdom,

wanting of previous life enemies and you trying to stop her' he explained. 'Do you know our friends?' asked Edmond,

King Arthur: Of course, I do,

Filled with grace, elegance, intelligence and compassion, Ishani, she is a loyal friend as well as a leader fulfilling all her duties.

Perfect example of a leader, filled with wisdom, justice, fierceness and selflessness, Mario a scope of sacrifice and love

A true leader, with bravery and capability to handle greatest problems, Himank, balancing love and duties perfectly

The best example of tolerance, sacrifice and acceptance, Edmond, always thinking for others more than himself, generous and brave

Sacrifice, love, bravery, intelligence, fierceness and generosity, Vidushi, setting an example of love and bravery at the same time.

Filled with love, compassion and wisdom, Hana, always ready to help.

Edmond and Vidushi smiled to hear that. 'Carry on your weapons along with theirs' don't delay, otherwise a cold snap of blanket of ice will take over,' he said and disappeared. 'What did he mean by "A cold snap"?' asked Vidushi, 'Oh no, it's about to snow!' said Edmond as he understood the meaning of King Arthur's jumbled words. 'Hurry up,' he said. Both of them carried on weapons but some weapons came floating towards them

showing a special sign to pick those. They quickly hurried up to pack those weapons in a bag when Vidushi noticed a hidden room.

Both of them went there, to figure out. What they saw there amazed them! They saw magical weapons in there. The fireballs' arrows, which can triple the arrows made of fire! The dragons' swords, which can extend their length and if once touched a person, they might not survive. Spears made of water, which can carry the flood anywhere. Other arrows that contain current, they will burn anyone if touched, magical bombs, if thrown they can cause disasters like flood, fire, earthquake, etc and at last the magical barrier which can stop any power (Except Telacrips).

Edmond packed those weapons as well, 'Hurry up, winter season is about to take over, it will be snowing a lot this time!' said Edmond as they both hurriedly went out of the cave and straight to Alaika's palace, where Himank was trying to protect himself and with all his might. As they reached at the door of the palace, a dragons' sword came floating towards Mario as if it's meant for him. Mario was surprised at first, but then he accepted the sword and ran forward, he didn't really know how to fight with a sword but his hands and his feet worked in coordination to help him fight.

A man was trying to kill Himank from back while he was stopping Alaika, Mario ran towards him and Smash! He killed that man, and the trace of his blood remained on the sword. Mario felt bad about murdering someone, but then he realized that it was a battle, and deaths were

inevitable. He moved his hand towards right to defend Himank and the sword extended itself and killed two people, Mario looked behind, a man was trying to kill him, he was about to die when smash again! A burning arrow hit him and the fire burnt his body and he died; it was Vidushi to save him holding a bow and arrows. Edmond took the sword King Arthur gave him and moved further, Himank's capability to stop Alaika was finished he was about to stop, when Edmond pushed Alaika forcing her to fall. Himank fainted; Vidushi was trying her best as an archer to defend herself.

Three of them came closer to each other, Vidushi with her bow and arrows and Mario and Edmond with their swords. Vidushi threw an arrow trying to kill a tiger-human man, but she missed it. They were less and Alaika's servants were in abundance. They didn't even have the barrier to protect themselves. They were near the wall and Alaika's soldiers were all around them from three sides, there was no place to escape. Just then, a bomb landed there and caused a flood. Three of them had no idea who was the one to throw the bomb. It was Ishani, along with Hana and other people from Nimbaurs who were willing to fight, now, they had an army. Edmond, Vidushi and Mario got out of the palace. It was about to sink when a snowflake landed on Vidushi's nose, 'Oh no!' she said and snowfall started. There was a cold snap and the weather became chill unexpectedly, which was unusual. 'The water inside can freeze!' said Edmond, 'It's not possible according to science' said Mario, 'But it is possible in Nimbaurs,' said Edmond, 'So what is wrong in that?', 'Our half of the army and our weapons are

inside,’ said Edmond ‘And most importantly Himank!’ said Vidushi as she ran towards the palace, ‘Vidushi are you crazy? Stop!’ Mario tried to stop her but Vidushi didn’t listen, there was a huge flood, she first took out the weapons which were floating in a bag there. She used her arrows to set a fire there, and burnt the palace, ‘Vidushi! What is the use of setting fire!’ said Mario, ‘It can evaporate water and if it does not, it will at least reduce the water,’ said Vidushi, ‘Her words make sense,’ said Edmond. ‘No, they don’t! Ishani and Himank are inside along with the only army we have which is dying in a flood, and Vidushi is risking her own life!’ shouted Mario as he was very upset, they took a look all around, people were running for their lives, it was a great chaos.

They could hear the screams and whimpers of people which worried Mario even more. ‘Don’t forget that everything here is magic, she is intelligent, look at the barrier she is creating’ Edmond pointed out to Vidushi, she was creating a barrier which could stop the flood, but it could save Alaika’s soldiers as well, Mario and Edmond ran to help her, the snow was getting heavier. Vidushi finally created a barrier which stopped all the flood water and it flowed outside, ‘Get Himank and Ishani,’ said Vidushi.

Mario went inside with his sword to look for them, he found Himank but he was unable to spot Ishani, meanwhile, Ishani was laying outside the castle. Mario killed few people to defend himself as he uplifted Himank on his back, ‘Edmond, do you have the potion?’

questioned Vidushi as she was breathless, Edmond took out a bottle and fed a liquid to Himank.

Himank woke up, he saw that their soldiers were fighting. 'Ishani!' he shouted as he saw Ishani unconscious at the back side of castle and a man was trying to kill her, but she was safe as one of their archers killed that man and saved Ishani. Four of them ran towards Ishani and made her drink the potion, Ishani didn't get up. Vidushi again gave her the potion but she didn't get conscious, 'Are you sure this is the same potion?' asked Mario, 'Yes, I used this same bottle to feed Vidushi' replied Edmond, 'Then why she is not waking,'. They were confused that why she is dead to the world. 'Guys, I got a very bad thought,' said Mario after thinking a lot, 'What?' 'Uh-uhm is she...dead?' he said, 'Shut up!' Vidushi snapped, 'Edmond, get some more potion' commanded Mario, 'No, a war is going on, and we cannot leave it for a single person, keep Ishani somewhere safe' said Vidushi, 'I agree with her,' said Himank, 'So you want her to die?' snapped Mario being protective as he glared at Himank, 'Mario, watch out!', an arrow was about to hit Mario, but luckily he survived, 'Keep her aside, and continue to the war!' shouted Vidushi as she got on her toes with her arrows of fire. Alaiika was killing people like it was a game for her. They kept Ishani somewhere safe and continued.

12.

Battle

Blood was everywhere; their army was getting weaker. Himank realized that Hana was not around, 'Hey, where is Hana?' he asked, 'I-I don't know,' replied Mario.

Meanwhile, Hana was in Alaika's trap. She was in the prison with other people; Alaika had not taken her blood yet as she was fighting in the war. She noticed others there; all seemed to be very weak. 'Hi, I'm Hana, who're you?' asked Hana to a young girl who was dreadfully laying aside, 'D-Dishita,' the girl replied in a frail voice. 'What happened to you all, why're you like this?' questioned Hana as she saw everyone's condition. 'Alaika-uh-she...she needs our blood,' said Dishita, 'We hardly g-get a few... crumbs of bread to eat and dirty water to drink,' said Dishita, 'I'm so sorry for that,'. 'And, who're you?' Hana asked to a boy siting aside Dishita, 'I-am...Madhav,' said the boy. 'Madhav! My friend Vidushi talks a lot about you, are you, her brother?' said Hana as she rose with excitement. 'Vidushi, where is she?' asked Madhav as his mind lightened up with some hope, 'She is here only, in Nimbaurs,' 'In Nimbaurs? She'll not be safe, what is she doing here?' asked Madhav as he was very curious and eager to know Hana's reply, 'I'm not certain, but yeah, she wants to save you guys, if I'm not wrong, a battle is going outside' said Hana, 'What!' exclaimed Lavaya as he finally spoke up, 'Yes, some others are also there, Mario, Ishani, Edmond and

Himank' said Hana, 'Mario, Ishani and Edmond! How could they be here,' muttered Madhav to himself. 'We can actually get out of here, I've got a plan,' said Hana.

Sunny and the other Husky were lying there looking for some hope. 'Hey,' Hana called out the guard, the grumpy guard came, Hana made him look into her eyes and said '1....2....3...' the guard repeated after him, 'Open the door,' said Hana as she had hypnotized the guard, the guard opened the gate and all of them were free. After many weeks, Lavaya, Dishita and Madhav were over the moon. 'Come on,' she said, they sneaked out of the palace, a little water was on the floor which made their trousers wet. The Husky and Sunny were also moving after them, wagging their tail. All people were fighting, dead people were laying on floor, blood was flowing everywhere.

Madhav spotted Vidushi holding a bow and arrows and was killing all of Alaika's soldiers one by one, Mario was also there, fighting with a sword. Edmond was using spears made of fire and was throwing them wherever Alaika's soldiers were. Alaika was just waving her hands and killing all of them, Madhav also spotted a boy who was standing and forming a barrier for Mario, it was Himank. Everyone was fighting, and then suddenly, there was a huge Boom! A bomb fell right in middle of the palace and caused a very horrifying earthquake. This shook-off everyone.

Alaika and her soldiers were losing power, so was Himank's army. 'All of you shall stop fighting!' she announced, 'I announce a truce, we'll continue the war tomorrow, if it is fair with you,' she said. 'Sure, but none

of your soldiers will attack over-night' said Himank, everyone stopped fighting and went back. 'Hana, where were you?' asked Edmond, 'I got all the other lost people back!' said Hana, 'What?' Vidushi was shocked to hear that.

All of them were packing up stuff and picking the dead bodies, but Vidushi was looking for Madhav with some hope, she looked besides, inside, and everywhere. Madhav too was looking for Vidushi, Mario, Ishani and Edmond. Madhav was following Hana when he saw a tall thin girl, she had grey eyes and fair but tanned skin, her brown curly neck-length hair was flowing with the wind. She looked familiar 'Vidushi?' muttered Madhav. Vidushi too spotted him. Both of them ran towards each other and hugged each other tightly, 'Madhav!' exclaimed Mario in happiness and he too ran towards both of them and hugged them.

'What are you both doing here? And the girl told me that Ishani and Edmond are also here,' said Madhav, a cute dog who was Sunny came running to Vidushi and jumped on her and Mario with happiness. Sunny was very happy to see them. 'Mario, Vidushi, we should go back, others will be worried about us' said Madhav, 'Of course not! A war is going on, and we cannot leave it like this!' said Mario, 'I'm not asking you, I'm telling you that we're going back!' stated Madhav as he got stern. 'But what about these people and, Himank and Edmond!' said Vidushi, 'Let them die, why do you care?' shouted Madhav at Vidushi, he went away. All of them went to Himank's house.

‘Why isn’t Ishani waking up!’ cried Mario. They had tried all types of potions, medicines and techniques to get Ishani back to normal. She was just unconscious, ‘You said there was a flood, may be water is stuck in her lungs,’ said Dishita as she was eating rice after many days, all of them were glad to have food and love after many weeks. ‘We’ve tried to take out the water, it’s not that,’ said Himank.

‘Himank Bhaiya, I might know what’s happened to her,’ said Lavaya, ‘Really, what?’ asked Himank, ‘She might have seen a Jophin,’ said Lavaya, ‘What’s that,’ said Edmond as he tied a bandage on his bleeding arm and knee. ‘Jophin is a creature, it produces a harmful gas from his mouth, if anyone smells it, he or she can die,’ said Lavaya, ‘But it can only produce a little amount of gas once an hour,’. ‘And how do you know that?’ asked Mario, ‘I heard a soldier talking about it when I was kidnapped’ said Lavaya, ‘Is she d-dead?’ asked Edmond, ‘No, she was with me all the time, at end, she just dropped a bomb, that’s all,’ said Hana. ‘Then what it could be?’ said Vidushi as she was stressed out, ‘Is she dead!’. ‘No, she is breathing, she is alive,’ said Dishita.

‘I’ve a theory! What if she has been cursed by zombies!’ said Mario getting back to his character, ‘Mario, there is no time for jokes!’ said Edmond. ‘I have a theory, the gas might have dissolved in water that came by flood, and Ishani had smelled it,’ said Dishita, ‘So, she indirectly smelled the gas, that’s why she is not waking up, I get it now!’ said Vidushi, ‘Oh no!’ gasped Himank, ‘Alaika has played a great move,’. ‘I was so foolish to think that

Alaika is really pausing the war,' said Himank, 'What do you mean?' asked Edmond as he was puzzled, 'She'll ask that creature to spread the gas everywhere to kill our people,' said Himank and he straightened up and went outside, everyone were healing each other, 'All of you listen here!' he shouted out, 'I'm creating a barrier, and none of you will get out of it, otherwise you might die,' he announced and started to form a magical barrier around his house. 'Himank,' called out Edmond, 'What can we do with Ishani?'. 'I don't know!' he shouted as he was running on fumes.

'We've tried almost every potion to heal her,' said a lady to Hana, Ishani's condition was getting worse, she was starting to shiver now. 'Edmond, you said that there is a library in Nimbaurs, I think the cure will be there,' said Vidushi, 'Come on, let's go' whispered Edmond, 'Will you not be telling Himank?', 'He already is very stressed, we'll go and return in a while,' said Edmond.

They wore a mask and headed to the library, it was almost dark, they could hear beetles and owls. 'Hurry up!' said Edmond, 'If you say that one more time, I'll really kill you!' Vidushi shouted as she was annoyed by Edmond who was trying to pick on her.

'Look, there is the library' said Edmond as he pointed out towards a haunted-look-giving building covered with many climbers and was hidden behind trees. Yellowish light was reflecting out from the windows. 'Let's go,' said Vidushi as she grabbed Edmond's hand to move further but Edmond did not take a step, 'Are you sure that we need to go there?' he asked as she gave a nervous look, 'I

mean anything can be there inside, this building is over 20,000 years old'. 'Why don't you straightforwardly say that you are feeling scared,' said Vidushi, 'Uh-um I'm not scared, I was just warning,' said Vidushi, 'You are scared,' she said and laughed in his face in an unkind way, Edmond found that odd. She grabbed Edmond's hand and took him to that spooky building.

They entered that huge building. Spider webs were hanging there; there was a lantern producing a dim light. Vidushi went further. Edmond was starting to feel scared; he stood there. 'Vidushi! Don't go further,' he called out but Vidushi didn't listen, 'Where the bloody hell I have come to!' he muttered to himself. Suddenly he heard a voice, of stomping and kicking. Edmond got frightened, 'Vidushi, is that you?' he asked, he went behind many broken bookshelves.

It was Vidushi there, she was dancing in a weird way, she took rounds and kicked a shelf which fell down. It was classical dance or martial arts or something else, Edmond could not figure out. 'Vidushi, what're you doing' he tried to stop her. She was looking like a witch; her hair was open and were looking messy. 'Vidushi, calm down, what's wrong with you!' She sat down and took circles, it was really weird, strong winds started which gave Edmond almost a heart attack, Edmond took a deep breath and went near Vidushi, he gripped her arm and stopped her, Edmond was feeling like taking last few breaths.

Vidushi screamed loudly in fury she came towards Edmond; he stepped back and ran. Vidushi came after him. Edmond was lost somewhere in that building, and

Vidushi teleported from where she was to where Edmond is. Edmond was panicking, he ran away again and found that Vidushi teleported there to, he realized that wherever he goes she will be there. Although he never met his parents, Edmond remembered the words of his ancestors told by his step aunt, "Every problem has four solutions, accept it, ignore it, change it or face it" these words echoed in his mind. Edmond took a sharp turn and looked at Vidushi, for a while he wondered that from whom is he feeling scared? Vidushi, his best friend! He went near Vidushi, 'Vidushi!' he shouted and his voice echoed in the building; he gasped, Vidushi was breathing heavily, she glared at him. 'What's wrong with you!' he blurted again facing his fear. Strong winds blew off the lantern which made it very dark, it was snowing as well. Vidushi gripped Edmond's neck tightly making it hard for him to breathe. Edmond held her hand and pushed her away, Vidushi glared at him. She was about to hit him but Edmond stopped her.

Vidushi slowly transformed into a goblin kind of vampire. She was short and thin had round face and black long hair, her skin turned grey and looked powerful. She was a Jophin which was a creature Lavaya talked about, not Vidushi but an actual Jophin who transformed herself into Vidushi. 'Who are you! Where is Vidushi?' shouted Edmond. That Jophin pushed Edmond and he fell down, Edmond got up, on the right side of him, there was a shelf which was containing a metal rod. Edmond took that and hit that Jophin with it. The Jophin came closer and kicked him, Edmond again fell down. Wall was behind him; there was no place to run. The Jophin came closer to him

and screamed like an insane. 'W-What do you want,' asked Edmond trying to be fearless, that Jophin opened her mouth and a green gas came out. Edmond covered his mouth and nose. Nothing was visible because of that gas, he ran outside.

He went outside and ran as fast as he could. As nothing was visible, he bumped his head into a tree and fell down. He saw the green gas fading and the Jophin was coming to him. He was feeling scared, what to do and where to go, nothing was understood by him. 'Oh god! What should I do, please help!' he said in a low-pitched voice. No matter he goes anywhere, the Jophin caught him everywhere. 'Oh Himank! Why are you always right,' he muttered. He saw a Jophin at right side of him, she vanished, she then appeared at the left side suddenly, she again disappeared making Edmond even more scared, someone patted his back. Edmond dared to look behind and saw the Jophin, he screamed and tried to run away. The Jophin embraced Edmond's arm, 'What do you want?' he shouted, 'Show me the way to where others are, you'll survive,' said the Jophin, 'I'll die but I'll not let you harm them' he said. The Jophin took out his mask and pushed him to where the gas was because she could not produce gas for the next one hour. Edmond covered his mouth. He was unable to breathe and see anything.

Edmond was about to die; he could inhale the gas any moment and die. Edmond ran away as fast as he could but still could not find the way out of the gassy place. He could not hold his breath anymore. He sprinted to get out of there and finally exhaled. He started to breathe heavily. He could

not spot the Jophin. He thought that the Jophin might follow him till he reaches the home. He spent the night in the woods. It was really scary; it was extremely dark.

Meanwhile, everyone was worried about Edmond and Ishani at home including the real Vidushi. 'Where is Edmond?' asked Vidushi to Himank, 'I don't know, why you always ask me!' he yelled as he was feeling blue because of taking the situation too hard. Everyone was worried about Edmond and Ishani.

Edmond was trying to sleep; mosquitoes were biting him again and again. He got irritated and woke up. He thought that it would be better to go to the library again. He went to the library in hope of making Ishani alright. There were many shelves and many books. How could he find a specific book on a specific topic. He was searching around when he tripped and fell, 'Ow!' he found a book next to him, it was labelled as 'The Jophin'. 'Yes, that's what I want' he said and got up. He went to a safe place in the same library to read that book. Someone tapped him on his shoulder; he looked behind and the same Jophin was standing and looking at him. 'Oh no!', he quickly covered his mouth and nose and ran away. He knew what was going to happen next, the Jophin will appear there, produce a green gas which will kill him. He kept his mouth covered with a nylon cloth which he tore from his jacket.

He could not run very fast in heavy snow. It was very cold. As he expected, the Jophin produced a gas from her mouth, she pushed Edmond in there. Jophin's mouth was covered, so she could survive, Edmond's face was

covered too. He made an effort to get up, and spot her. The Jophin was about to disappear herself when Edmond held her hand tightly, Edmond was trying to take out her mask while it was becoming hard for him to breathe, he tried and took out Jophin's mask, 'No!' the Jophin screamed before her death. Edmond ran as fast as he could to get fresh air. He took out his mask and started to breathe heavily. He opened the book; it was very dusty. He was not interested in information about them; he just looked for the cure.

Unfortunately, there was no cure, but Ishani smelled the gas indirectly. He searched a lot and finally found a page which said about the indirect smelling. 'Smelling of Green gas produced by Jophins indirectly can cause deep sleep for 50 years if not cured within 2 days. If any Jophin can suck back the gas from their lungs, they can be normal' he read out. 'Oh god! How'll we be able to get Ishani back to normal by tomorrow,' he muttered, 'Where can I find a Jophin!' he wondered, he looked at the Jophin laying where the gas was produced. 'Can this help me?' he wondered and went to her. Edmond knew that anyone who directly smells the gas can die, but what if, a Jophin herself smelled the gas? thinking the same, he flipped the pages of book 'If there is a consequence that any Jophin smells the gas produced by themselves, they can get unconscious, the cure is a medicine made from the fire-flower juice' Edmond read out. 'That's cool,' he muttered with a satisfied smile on his face. He went to the Jophin, 'H-Hey, if...if you want to save yourself, you've to do whatever I say,' said Edmond as he plucked some flowers which could heal her temporarily.

He squeezed the flowers and the juice went in the Jophin's mouth and she became conscious. 'What-what do you want from me?' asked Jophin in a frail and deadly voice. 'I'll let you live if you take back green gas from my friend,' 'D-deal' said the Jophin, Edmond was relieved, he took her to their home. Everyone was worried there. 'Oh-look! There he is, sir Edmond' squealed one of them. 'Edmond!' Mario ran towards and hugged him, he saw the Jophin behind him, he screamed 'Agh!'. 'Don't worry she'll not harm you,' said Edmond, 'Edmond! Where were you, you got us so worried!' said Vidushi as she came outside and was about to hug Edmond when she saw the Jophin, she screamed as she was fearing the Jophin, embracing Mario's arm, Mario too gripped Vidushi's hand as they both were really afraid of the Jophin. 'Don't panic, she is here to heal Ishani,' said Edmond. Himank had seen Edmond but was still ignoring him.

Edmond took the Jophin to Ishani. As told, the Jophin took all the poison from Ishani's body and she came to life. She instantly got up and gasped. 'Ishani!' Mario and Vidushi hugged her. Edmond was also relieved to save her. 'Himank, see, Ishani is back! So is Edmond,' said Hana. Himank didn't bother at all; he hid his silent gladness. 'Hey bro, Ishani is alright' said Edmond with a smile as he came to Himank, 'Good,' said Himank and he walked away. Edmond knew that Himank would be upset, he already was. Himank's army had a Jophin now which made them powerful. Everyone was hoping for a win against Alaika tomorrow, anything could happen. The ones who were alive could be dead.

13.

Forever history

Next morning, everyone was prepared to fight against Alaika. Hana was also ready to hypnotize others. Mario and Himank with their dragon swords, Edmond with King Arthur's sword, arrows and bombs, Vidushi with her fire creating arrows and bow, and Ishani with her spears and bombs which could create a disaster. Other people were also ready with their arrows, bows, spears, swords, bombs, shields and barriers.

They headed for the fight. Alaika's soldiers had planned to attack them on the way to the battlefield. They threw bombs on them. All of them protected themselves with a barrier. The battle started again. Everyone was fighting, streams of blood were flowing. Madhav, Lavaya and Dishita stayed at home. Mario shot two men and a servant took them to Hana who healed and hypnotized them to work for her. Alaika was just waving her hands. The Jophin with Himank was producing a lot of gas which was killing the enemy. Everyone was exhausted. 'Come on archers!' shouted Vidushi as she signed all the archers to come above a rock so they can shoot easily and safely. Someone blasted a bomb! It caused the ground to shake. Large number of people died especially Alaika's soldiers. The whole building broke. Walls were falling and the broken windows' glass was shattering. Himank was trying to find out a safe place. Mario and Himank held each other's shoulder tightly and bent to protect

themselves, meanwhile Vidushi with the one who blasted the bomb Ishani, hurried to get under a door which was shuttering them. Hana hid herself under a desk. 'Oh god! These bombs cause such a chaos!' muttered Alaika as she was terrified to see her people dying. Still, Alaika's army was way too strong than Himank's.

Someone from Alaika's army dropped a water bomb which caused a flood. The bomb was not that big so less people were injured and dead, most of them were safe until Himank realized that it is winter season. 'Mario!' he called out, 'You don't know about the winters in Nimbaurs, this water can freeze in minutes!' said Himank with his face lightning up. As Himank expected, the water froze. It made an icy hill. Alaika was also inside that. Everyone was glad and hoped that they defeated Alaika, but Alaika who was made of fire wasn't that weak. She could not die from a small flood; she made an effort to apply magical force. The warmth of fire melted the ice which worried Mario. Alaika earlier had around 250 people in her army which had reduced to 150 people.

Victory was feeling close when there was a sudden and awkward silence. Ishani was attacked by Edmond's arrows; she crept further to protect herself. Ishani looked at Edmond with her eyes who could never imagine that, Edmond; Ishani's beloved friend would ever attack her. Ishani who was struggling with herself puzzling whether to attack Edmond or not, did not find any other option rather than sobbing; sobbing and getting up behaving strong and bold and, unstoppable and unbreakable like a rock. Did Edmond actually attack her? Wondering the

same she stepped further showing the enactments of a true queen, she could not believe that it was Edmond who ambushed her. She wiped her eyes doubting herself that it was Edmond to struck her. She had to accept it, she knew that it was no time to think so she also attacked on Edmond with the water arrows, on the other side Edmond attacked with his fire arrows.

‘Edmond?’ ‘How can he attack Ishani!’ exclaimed Mario as he came near the rock where Vidushi was standing, ‘The point of worrying is that if fire arrows and water arrows face each other, it can cause a great disaster,’. Everyone was staring at them, especially Alaika with wide eyes and a gentle and malicious smile. The two arrows collided and there was a huge blast! Mario pulled Vidushi closer to himself to protect her from that disaster. Edmond survived, so did Ishani, but their fight wasn’t over yet. Ishani came closer to Edmond with a regretful face and tears showering from her eyes, she held a sword with her. Edmond took King Arthur’s sword and stepped forward to face Ishani. He tried to strike Ishani but she glided past him. Edmond turned around, he was fighting very gently with her, but Ishani could not see ‘friends’ ‘regret’ ‘cheat’, she could only see ‘war’ and she had to fight. Everyone stood back.

In the whole battlefield, only they were fighting. Ishani suddenly stabbed the sword into Edmond’s belly. Edmond looked at Ishani, he was in pain but he didn’t scream. Both of their eyes were watering, Ishani had a mixed expression of a feeling of sadness, regret and fury. Edmond gripped his belly tight and gave a smile to Ishani

before falling. Edmond fell down, probably died. Himank who was trying to control tears lost his patience, he screamed loudly and grabbed everyone's attention. It was the first time when Himank was wailing loudly. He forgot everything, only Edmond was in his mind. He was burning with fury. He took the dragons' sword and a shield and headed towards Alaika.

The stomps of his feet shivered everyone. Alaika also headed towards him forming a fireball with her hands. She threw her huge fireballs on Himank. Himank protected himself with the shield from the smaller fireballs, but as the size of Alaika's fireballs increased, Himank had to use Telacrips. He forced Alaika's fireballs to turn back and attack her. Alaika protected herself with a shield. They both came closer. There was a silence in the whole battlefield, no one dared to interfere between them. Himank raised his sword; Alaika snatched a man's sword who was steadily looking at them. Alaika thrust the sword, Himank defended himself, he kicked Alaika and forced her to fall. Alaika got up and stabbed the sword into Himank's shoulder.

Himank was badly injured, he fell down. Taking the advantage of his weakness, she gored the sword unto Himank's thigh, he badly fell-off and gripped his thigh tightly in pain. 'You're a servant, act like one!' muttered Alaika as she bowed down to see Himank fell on the ground. Today was the day, when good had to win over evil, and Himank could not step back on this big occasion. Alaika stood and turned around to see everyone hiding under trees, behind rocks, etc. She didn't even have the

idea that Himank could still attack. Himank got up, he gasped and picked up his sword. Himank was really intelligent, he observed that Alaika's hands, especially fingers were her main power. 'Everybody, see this boy, this happens when you try to face me!' Alaika beating the bush in ego when Himank attacked her silently from back. He struck and stabbed the sword into Alaika's hand. Alaika screamed in pain.

She was losing power; Himank took the advantage of her weakness and cut her other hand. Alaika was terrified, she gasped and then laughed out aloud which was really awkward. 'You all fools! You don't know my boon, do you? I'm immortal!' she shouted. Himank giggled, he took out a shackle out of his pocket and tied it into Alaika's foot. Alaika was astonished to see that, she glared at Himank 'I like reading books, I read one about you too; Onyx and Raven got me the shackles' he said with a smile on his face as the two foxes, Onyx and Raven who met Mario the other day came out of the bush, 'Thanks a lot Onyx, I admire you efforts, Raven as well,' said Himank. Alaika turned into ashes, she didn't die, it was just a temporary solution to keep her away. Everyone screamed with joy and laughter.

They won the war! Ishani came and hugged Mario and Vidushi. Hana was also really happy. But Himank still had a depressed face. It was Edmond, how could Himank forget him. Everyone was happy and glad, so was Himank but the pain of losing Edmond had given him an irremediable heartbreak. He went near Edmond and silently looked at him; his eyes were watering. Soon,

Ishani, Mario, Vidushi and Hana also realized that. They came running near Himank and Edmond.

Edmond was laying down, blood was flowing, but he still was breathing. Himank kept him on his lap, 'Why! Why do always have to do something that I cannot manage! Why!' he shouted as he was sobbing. He was furious and was wailing at the same time. Mario, Vidushi, Ishani and Hana also had tears in their eyes. 'Why are you so careless! Why do you never think of me!' he shouted again, 'It's my fault...I killed him' said Ishani as she could not hold her tears anymore. 'H...imank,' said Edmond in a frail voice, Himank looked at him. 'I'm not dying...just peep into my wound,' said Edmond, Vidushi took a look at Edmond's wound, which had disappeared, 'What!' 'I'm not that fool, I do wear a safety armour plate inside the coat, and I also have potions, but it-it still pains...' he muttered. 'Just don't take me to the doctor,' he said as he got up.

Himank hugged Edmond tightly, it was a heart touching moment.

They had earned a lot of respect from the people of Nimbaurs. Everyone accepted them as their kings and queens. All the people of Nimbaurs rebuilt the palace, it was very spacious and prestigious. It had white tiles and the sloped roof was covered with snow. There was a hall where 6 thrones were placed. First, for the perspicacious and righteous queen, Ishani. Second, for the valiant and truthful king, Edmond. Third, for the empathetic and charming queen, Hana. Fourth, for the proactive and valorous king, Mario. Fifth, for the resilient and valiant

queen, Vidushi. And, the sixth, for the pioneer and fearless king, Himank. In that palace, there were 15 rooms. Excluding the hall, there were 8 bedrooms, 3 common sitting room and 1 room as a kitchen and other 2 rooms for the servants. One room was left, that room was forbidden. In that room, there was a trunk inside which, the jar was kept with Alaika's ashes. All the weapons were stored in that room, also, there was a rack in which books were kept about the forbidden history of Nimbaurs, these books were written by Mario and Vidushi. The photos of the six were hung on the wall. And the names of soldiers who fought and died during the war with Alaika were scribbled on a pole. There were no windows in that room and the key of that room was kept safe with Himank. In the evening, everyone was sitting in the common room including Dishita, Lavaya and Madhav along with the two dogs. 'It feels nice after winning the struggle,' said Hana.

'Yeah, but I wonder why Edmond attacked on me!' said Ishani looking at Edmond who was sipping medicinal potion to feel better for his belly injury. After hearing that, Edmond seemed to be downcast. 'What happened?'. 'Alaika knew where my parents were,' said Edmond, 'She blackmailed me of killing them,'. Everyone felt sorry for that, 'So why don't you look for them now,' said Dishita. Edmond knew that there was no use of looking for them so he tried to change the topic. 'I must remind you guys that we have to go back as well,' said Madhav, 'That's true! I totally forgot about that,' said Mario. Nobody wished to go but they had to leave Nimbaurs. 'The point of worrying is that what'll we say the police that where

were we,' exclaimed Himank, 'I think Vidushi can help with that,' said Edmond as he looked at Vidushi. 'Ohkay... Hana you were the last one to be in the real world, what was the latest news then?' asked Vidushi. 'I don't clearly remember but I would say that a war had been broken out in Israel and Iraq, and India blasted a bomb on terrors after they murdered the people in Pahalgam,' Hana said. Vidushi thought for a while and then came up with an idea, 'Well we can say that the terrors kidnapped us and from the fear of India, they freed us' Everyone agreed on what Vidushi said.

The next morning, they all were in the main hall. 'I would like to announce our decision on Nimbaurs,' said Himank to the subject, 'We have to leave this place but we promise that we'll return whenever needed,' he continued 'Till then, Jophin will be the head of Nimbaurs and will be taking care of the rules and regulations' added Edmond. 'And, Onyx and Raven will be the chief ministers. Madhav, Lavaya and Dishita were standing beside and listening to them. Jophin came closer with the diary which could teleport them back to Chandigarh. The subject of Nimbaurs bid them a goodbye, 'All the best, we'll wait until you return,' said Raven as she looked at Onyx.

Everyone came closer and held hands; Madhav picked up Sunny and the Husky. Ishani touched the middle page and in seconds, they reached back into the park. Everything was the same, Miss Rastogi was having 3 dogs walking with her in front of the pet hostel, Miss Khanna's showroom was standing in the park, and Diya's candy shop. However, Vidushi, Madhav and Sunny went home,

there mother was pleased to see them, tears of happiness were flopping out of her eyes, same happened with Mario and Ishani when they reached home to meet their families. Miss Khanna was also very glad to see Edmond. And when Laavanya saw Lavaya, she squealed with delight. Dishita was also happy with her family. It was only Himank to not have a family and home to return to. He helped out Hana to book a flight and go back to her home in Japan. Himank didn't accept or showed it but he was into Hana.

Another day, all of them were called in the police station and asked about what had been happen with them. Vidushi told her false story and made everyone believe in it. All of them gave a statement and it was finally proved that terrorists had kidnapped them.

After that, Hana had her flight back to Japan, Ishani, Vidushi, Mario, Edmond and Himank went to the airport with her to bid her a final goodbye. 'Bye Hana, we'll be in touch' said Ishani as Hana was about to take the bus to the airplane. 'We'll miss you,' said Edmond with a smile on his face. Everyone was standing nearby Hana except Himank; he stood away and just watched them. It was almost the time to go, but Hana didn't want to go without saying a goodbye to Himank. She went near him, 'Himank, I'm about to leave,' she said, Himank was unhappy, he didn't want Hana to go. He avoided making an eye contact with Hana. 'Himank, my bus is waiting I've to go,' she said again 'Go,' said Himank boldly hiding his emotions.

Hana boarded into the bus. Himank saw that, he didn't think that Hana actually meant about taking the bus to the airplane. The bus moved, Himank ran after the bus with all his might, Hana was looking at him and others from the window. Himank was running as fast as the bus, 'Hana!' shouted out Himank, Hana smiled. 'Call us after you reach, and you have to come back one day!' he shouted out as he finally stopped running. Hana waved at them and finally she boarded into the airplane and went back to her home in Japan.

Edmond and Himank didn't have a definite family, so they started to live together in a cabin, to earn money, they started working at a café. Five of them studied in the same school and their friendship had become unbreakable. The Nimbaurs notebook was locked in a cupboard and Edmond had the keys. In evening, the 5 were walking past the park wondering about their time spent in Nimbaurs. Hana kept talking to them and the regular normal days continued.

As of Onyx and Raven who anonymously helped Himank without anyone knowing, they met Himank in the library with portals. Himank was already against Alaika and so were both those foxes in her atrocity. They ended up negotiating with each other. Onyx and Raven too faced a quest to find out about Alaika's secret and shackles.

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About the author

Reyanshi Bhatia

Reyanshi Bhatia is just an 11-year-old young author who has the ability to change thoughts into words. This is her debut fantasy novel which expresses her thoughts and imaginations. When she is not crafting magical words, she can be found racing building up her athlete muscles and playing chess. She is an all-rounder girl who enjoys sketching, chilling with friends, learning new languages, listening to music and creating her own melodies on piano and dreaming up new things. She lives in Chandigarh, Haryana, India. She is a bright student of Bhavan Vidyalaya Panchkula who holds up school duties and also shows up with good marks. She'll keep writing because once you open the door to imagination, it's impossible to close it back.