National Bestseller

Accidentally Cupid



A Romantic Comedy Novel

PRACHI GUPTA SANCHIT GARG

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ACCIDENTALLY CU

BY

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This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents

Acknowledgement

I would like to say a massive thanks to Sanchit for making the book lo

This book is dedicated to my little brother, who had the first privilege

To my dearest friends whose qualities I have pictured in the main chara

And at last, dedicated to those who are reading this book right now. W

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CHAPTER-1

The Unplanned Surprise

I opened my door and found Nishi with her 6 month baby boy

"Hi, baby!" I smiled and waved at him.

Since our friendship of 6 years back, my house has been her favourite

"What's it this time?" I asked her at the entrance.

She ignored my question. "I'm in a very bad mood today. One should never fall in love and all love marriages are useless."

She went in with the kangaroo baby carrier and landed straight on the

I closed my door and went to sit on the couch beside her.

"Once you get married and have children, all the love just disappears,"

"Looks like you had a fight with him again." I smiled.

Nishi snorted in anger. "He forgot my birthday. I'm going to kill him."

I was kind of enjoying it. Before I could utter anything else, my doorb

"Wait,

I will be back in a minute," saying so I rushed to the door. I didn't want I opened the door and there he was, the man she was furiously angry at;

He peeped inside from the gate and whispered, "Is she here?"

"Yes!" I hissed. "And in a very bad mood. You are probably going to be dead tod

"Please help me out. I cannot think of anything right now," he pleaded.

I shook my head. "Nope. You made a mistake."

A deep sigh emanated from him. "I didn't forget her birthday!"

I rose a brow, "really."

"Yes." He looked at me helplessly.

"It was, she wanted me to be the first one to wish her and it was you

"Oops! Sorry!" I bit my lower lip. "Don't worry, I will do something. Wait outside and v

"What took you so long?" she enquired.

"Nothing dear, someone was asking for an address." I sat down again.

"Sweetie, I shouldn't have told you but I guess it's the right time to te

She looked at me suspiciously. "So why didn't he tell me about the pa

"Stop acting like Sherlock Holmes," I scolded her .

"It's a surprise, you silly. Why would he tell you and spoil the fun. And about t

“He better have planned something or else he’s dead,” said Nishi, firml
Seeing Nishi cooled enough, I quickly messaged him ‘Mission accompli
“Is the territory safe now? Has she cooled down?”
I smiled. “Don’t worry, everything is under control. Come in.” I closed
He went to sit on the couch beside Nishi. “I think I should shift to Ra
he commented, sarcastically.
Nishi shot him a side glance, “May I ask why?”
“Because my wife is found more than half of the time here. Shifting w
“No one can bear you, except me” scoffed Nishi.
“That’s true!” I giggled.
After a while, Nishi looked at him. “I think we should leave now.”
She stood up to leave.
“Ok, let’s go.” he stood up too and we followed Nishi to the exit.

At the main exit, he whispered to me in amazement, “Thanks, did you
“No!” I
smiled. “I just told her that you have a surprise party planed for her.”
His face turned pale from shock and he could only utter “WHAT.”
“It’s already late. You better be going fast,” I whispered with a wink .
“Oh No! Her remaining angry was better than this,” he murmured.
Turning back, Nishi asked, “What are you two whispering?”
“Nothing sweetheart, just asking about work.
Let’s go fast.” He hurried to the car.
I closed the door behind them and reached for the fridge. I was about
I now seriously doubted my decision of getting a transfer from Pune back
“Argh! Not again. I should better change my house. No, city,” I murmu
Leaving the bottle, I speed walked to the door. At the door was my co
“How was your interview?” I asked her.
“Good.” She picked the bottle I left on the kitchen counter.
“I have to go for a birthday party in the evening.
Do you want to tag along?” I asked her.
“If it’s fun, then sure.” She had few sips and left the bottle back on th
“My best friend, Nishi’s”
“Okay.”

At 5pm, a message pops.
‘Royal hotel at 7pm’

Around 8 in the night, we two reached the hotel gate. I was astonished
He did a splendid job in so less time. Going further in, we saw Nishi dre

heavy bill which was about to get him bankrupt after the party. The party

Exhausted, we reached home by midnight. After turning into our pyjam
“You didn’t like the party?” I asked her.
“No, it was great.”
“Then?”
She diverted her gaze from the ceiling to me.
“I’m a little confused. Your friend Nishi and her husband…”
“What’s with them?”
“They are sort of...
the most mismatched couple I have ever seen,” she took a pause “they ha
“I’m sure arranged,” she added.
“Love marriage.” I smiled.
“What. You got to be kidding,” she said as she sat up in one fluid mo
I shook my head in no.
“But How can love even happen, they looked poles apart.”
I smiled and said, “you must have studied physics. One law says OPPO
“OK. That’s quiet interesting.” Her eyes shined. “Tell me everything ab
.
I turned facing my back at her. Dragging my futon to my ear I said, “
She swayed me, “No! I’m not letting you sleep till you tell me.”
“Ok, relax. I’m telling.” I turned towards her.
“Start from the very beginning without missing a single detail. I don’t
I laughed. For the first time in her life, Varsha was more interested in

CHAPTER-2

Meeting The Stranger Again

This story started on a beautiful sunny September morning at my new c
The campus was big but not that lavish, which I hoped. Seriously, I want
I pulled the reception gate and was about to step out when a firm voice f
I turned back and saw this average height boy in white shirt and black
"I just wanted to know about my class," I replied, calmly.
"Fresher?" he asked.
"Yes."
"Freshman classes are in block A. May I take you there?" he suggested
"No thanks, I will manage."
"Go straight from here and then take a left turn. The first building is b

I quickly moved out and walked to Block A. I was so nervous that I e
It was a boring class. None appeared interesting to me. After the last c
"Sir,
I need to change my bus. Its already full and I can't travel standing every
"But that's the only bus on your route. I can't do anything," he said.
"Sorry sir, but having to pay so much I can't go in there," she said, fi
"You have to travel in that only," said the registrar.
"What the hell is the management doing, making fool of us," she said
.
"You have to arrange something, there are other kids too. Start a new l
I kept staring at her in amazement. *Whoa she's so small, just like a do*
. Totally fits her personality.
"Starting a new bus is not possible but I will talk to the bus committee
3 days to sort this problem ,till then manage in this bus," said the registra
"Excuse me, sir." I interrupted, "I need to deposit a cheque."
While I handed over the cheque to him I saw her vigorously searching
"Sir! I have a cheque too," she said.
He took our cheques and said, "you two wait till I bring you your rece
After the registrar left, that girl smiled at me.
"Hi! I'm Nishi Verma from IT."
"Hey, Radhika Gupta from IT as well." I smiled.

“Thanks,” said Nishi.

“For what?” I asked, flustered.

“I totally forgot about my cheque, yours reminded me.”

“Oh,” I smiled.

“If I had missed it, I would have to see that stupid bald head registrar

I giggled in return. Meanwhile the registrar appeared with the slips and

“I should rush now, the buses are about to leave. Nice to meet you. by

“Nice to meet you too,” I waved at her with a smile .

The third day evening, there were two surprise additions in my no. 10

I stepped inside the bus.

“Hey, Radhika!” standing up Nishi waved at me. “Come sit here,” she indicated towards th

The bus started and I walked slowly in the narrow space between the 2

“Hi Nishi, what a surprise. How are you here?” I asked.

“Nothing dear, there was space in this bus so they got me shifted here.

“They got us shifted here,” a voice came from the seat behind us.

“Okay Sid,” Nishi rolled her eyes. “They got us shifted,” she reiterated.

I turned to look back and saw a silly looking boy with a lingering smi

He was a thin dark boy wearing a red hoodie and blue jeans with gree

Hair, curly. “Hi! I’m Siddharth Malik.”

“Hi! I’m Radhika Gupta”.

“He’s also from IT,” said Nishi.

“Means she too…” his eyes widened. “Awesome! Next year we three w

“He’s my friend and neighbour,” said Nishi.

“Which section are you in, Nishi?” I asked.

“G”

“And you Siddharth? ”

“You can call me Sid,” he smiled. “Its J and yours?”

“Ok Sid, I’m in I.”

Sid took a deep breath. “Thank god, we got shifted here. It was a bori

“But this one looks good,” said Nishi.

I smiled at them.

“Hey! Radhika, are you single?” popped the most stupid question from

What. I was shocked. Who asks such a question on the first encounter t

“Yes,” I replied, quietly.

“You are really single?” asked Nishi, in amazement.

“Yep, what’s so surprising.”
I looked at her shocked face. “Do we need to have a boyfriend to qualify
“Well said!” Sid showed me a thumbs up.
“You are not single?” I asked her.
“No, she’s not” said Sid and smiled.
“Sid. I can answer. Will you please sit now” said Nishi, angrily.
Meanwhile my stop arrived. I stood up and walked to the bus gate. “Bye Nishi” I waved at her.
“Bye,” Sid waved.
“She said to me not you, stupid.”
I smiled as I walked out of the bus. The best thing happened in the fi

Next day after college in the same bus,
“Hey Girls! have you heard the rumour?” asked Sid .
“What rumour?” I asked.
“There is one senior who offered free college tour to freshman girls on
“So, what’s wrong in that. Its good, someone is helping,” Nishi interrup
“Oh Madam! let me finish,” said Sid.
In a scary tone he started, “Once you accept his help and talk a little t
“Radhika. Stay clear of that guy,” he added.
“Why only Radhika, not me?” Nishi snapped.
“You need not worry, he only follows pretty girls.” Sid stuck his tongu
Nishi shot him a dead look, “You idiot! One day I’m surely going to l
“Hey Stop! It hurts,” said Sid rubbing his arm.
“Say it once more and you are seriously getting it from me,” scolded N
“Okay buddy relax. It’s cool,” Sid grinned.
“OMG! I remember now. I met this guy,” I said in mock horror.
“Which guy?” asked Nishi.
“The one Sid is talking about.”
“Really. Where?” asked Sid, anxiously.
“At the reception. I was there to enquire about my classroom but it wa
“Then did you accept his tour?” asked Nishi.
“No. I just asked the directions and left.”
“Well done. You are safe. He won’t trouble you,” said Sid and smiled.
I took a deep breath. “Hope so.”

Few days later at lunch in Nishi’s class ,
“Hey Guys, I’m getting bored. Let’s do something interesting,” I sugges
“What?” asked Nishi.

“Ragging is on, right? So why not rag someone. All are new, no one will doubt us.” I smirked.

“Wow Girl!” Nishi winked at me. “I must say you are a sweet devil.”

I rolled my right hand outwards in admiration, “thank you.” They smiled.

“Cool, let’s do it!” said Sid, determined.

“So what’s the plan?” asked Nishi.

“Right now my class is empty, only two girls are there. So I will go t

They both nodded their heads in agreement.

So as planned, I reached my class and ran to the two girls there.

“Girls, you know two seniors are ragging badly in the next class. We a

Just then Sid and Nishi entered the class. There confidence really got a

“Still sitting, don’t you have the etiquettes to greet your seniors,” said S

“Sorry sir,” they said.

“You dark one, introduce yourself,” said Nishi.

“S-sir ma’am I… ” muttered the dark girl.

“Stop blabbering. Don’t you know how to talk,” scolded Nishi .

“Leave it. Both of you come here,” Sid called the two girls with me. “

They enacted well. The sight was so comic that I couldn’t stop my lau

“You naughty girl, I nearly missed a heartbeat,” said the pale one.

“But please don’t tell anyone of us being pranked,” requested the darke

“Okay,” said I and we all kinked.

Pointing towards Sid and Nishi I said, “girls they are Siddharth and Nishi from sec J and G.”

“I’m Preeti, civil,” said the dark one.

“Rashi, EC. Nice to meet you,” said the other one.

The bell rang and after bidding goodbye, both Nishi and Sid left for th

Soon Nishi became my best friend and Sid unwantedly tagged along. F

That evening in the bus we laughed again. The flashback was too amus

“That was awesome,” said Sid with a thumps up. “You are a genius rather quirky.”

“Those girls were nice,” sighed Nishi.

“That Rashi, your friend. Is she single?” asked Sid.

“Sorry. No,” I smiled.

“Bad luck,” teased Nishi .

Sid’s face went pale and we laughed at his disappointed look. We laug

“Easy girls, what’s going on there?” asked one teacher.

“Nothing ma’am, Sid just cracked a joke,” said Nishi shrugging her lau
“Sid, don’t keep that joke to yourself, share it with us all” ordered the
Sid gave a dead shot to Nishi. His face turned red of fear. I’m sure he
“Speak Sid, everyone is waiting,” teased Nishi.

He took a deep breath and started, “A newlywed couple went for a h
She again got on the horse. After a while, it joggled again. This time
When the horse dropped her a third time, she just took out a revolve
The husband shouted: 'what did you do you psycho. You killed the p
The wife gave a silent look and said: 'That’s one!!!' ”

Everyone laughed and giving Nishi a silent look with a raised eyeb
“Huh!” grunted Nishi.
“Nice joke, where did you get it?” I asked.
“It was original. On spot made.” Sid grinned.
“Really! How you got the idea?” asked Nishi.
“It was easy.” Sid Smirked. “I just imagined you in place of that
“What,”

Nishi’s mouth dropped open and she shot him an angry unamused loc

A month passed. Sid had great sense of humour. He was so antic that

One day, there was a notice at Block A’s noticeboard. That very evenir
“Hey guys! Checked the noticeboard?” I asked.
“Do we have a noticeboard?” asked Sid, surprised.
“Yes silly, there is.” I laughed. “You would see it if you keep your ey
Nishi laughed. “What’s the notice about?”
“We are having our fresher’s party this Sunday at 6,” I said in a happy
“That’s great, only 4 days left. I thought we will never have one,” said
“So, how are we going?” I asked.
“I’ll bring my mom’s car, pick you two on the way and we will get th
“That’s cool,” said Nishi .
“The car been standing for so long. It’s going to be its day out,” said
“I hope the car’s working,” I confirmed.
“It will have to work,” Sid smiled.
“Ok done then. The plan fixed. Message us the pickup time that very r

A message pops that Sunday morning,
Sid: B ready at 6. V wil pick u from ur stop.
Me: Ok.

It was 30 past 6. I had already called them 5 times and every time I c

"Get in fast. We are late," said Sid from the driver's seat.

Nishi opened the back door for me and I got seated next to her. Sid st

"What took you so long. 2 minutes more and I would have returned hc

"It wasn't my fault. She read the map wrong," shrugged Sid.

"How long have you been standing here?" asked Nishi.

"From past 1 hour," I whined.

"Sorry! it won't happen again," said Nishi.

"It better not," I said.

Our college was half hour drive from my place but in the mid-way the car stopped. After pushing that cart we somehow reached the college at 8 but by then the party was already over

"Damn! It's over!" Nishi pressed her palm on her forehead.

"Lets go back," said Sid.

I took a deep breath and said, "I'm not going back in that thing you c

"Let's go in an auto Radhika," Nishi suggested.

"Hey Girls! Wait! It won't be safe now. Stop here, till I arrange somet

We were the only ones standing beside that red car outside the college

"N-N-Nishi!" I gasped, clutching her arm. "You seeing?" My heart sinking horribly.

"What?" she asked.

"That boy with Sid."

"Oh! Him. He's Manas," said Nishi.

"OMG!" My jaw dropped open, "You know that senior?"

"Which senior?" she asked.

"The one who gave free tours the first day."

"No dear, you have mistaken. He's my classmate, Manas Goel."

I looked at her and whispered, "I'm not talking about the tall guy. The other one."

"Oh! You sure he's that senior?"

"100 percent," I nodded.

Nishi stared at him, surprised. "He is kinda cute. It's strange, seeing hi
"

"Hmm," I signed.

Meanwhile, Sid arrived with the two boys. The senior one left to get th

"We are going with them," said Sid.

Nishi grabbed Sid's arm. "Radhika come along," she ordered and took

“Sid, we are not going with them,” said Nishi, firmly.
“Sorry dear, we don’t have a choice. They are the last ones left. Me a
“I’m not going without her,” I sighed.
“Don’t worry he’s my friend,” said Sid.
I took a deep breath. “ok, let’s go Nishi.”

A spotless silver I10 stopped before us. Sid tied a rope between the tw
Scared, we two got in. Sid went to his car’s driving seat and signalled way. Sameer adjusted the rear view mirror.
“Hi I’m Sameer,” said he, eyes on the front road; driving.
“I’m Nishi.”
“And you miss?” asked Sameer, his eyes still on the road.
“Radhika.”
“Do you want to hear music?” asked Sameer.
“No thanks,” said Nishi.
Again the deadly silence for 20 minutes crawled inside the car.
“Stop! My home,” I said .
Sameer pulled the brakes and I got out of the car. After biding goodby
“Radhika! Wait!” shouted Sameer and ran behind me.
“I guess your house is a little far. May I walk with you?” asked Same
“No, it’s just five minutes walk from here, I’ll manage.”
“It’s not safe walking alone at this time of night. Let me,” he insisted.
“OK,” I agreed.
Sameer waved his hand to the others and shouted, “guys I’m dropping

We started walking. After few steps in silence he uttered, “So you are
“Yes.”
“Not classmates I guess,” said he.
“Bus mates.”
“Bus mates?”
“We go in the same bus,” I replied.
“Ok, and that girl with you?” he asked.
“Nishi! She also goes in the same bus.”
“Which trade yours?” asked he.
“IT”
“You talk less. You always that quiet?” asked he.
“No, sometimes,” I smiled.
Few seconds later I said, “My house. Thanks.”
“You’re welcome. Bye.” He smiled.

“Bye.”
He quickly ran back to his car. After entering my house, only one thin
.

An hour later, I got a call from Nishi.
“Hey! You ok?” asked Nishi.
“Yes, dear. What happened?”
“I was just confirming. The way that psycho jumped to help you, I got
“Everything’s good. Meet you at the bus tomorrow. Good night dear.”
“Good night.”

Next morning Sid overslept and missed the bus, but we caught him at
“You idiot! What were you thinking last night,” scolded Nishi.
“Hey! Calm down, what have I done?” asked Sid.
“Oh god! He’s being so innocent. You don’t know what happened,” sai
Sid shook his head, confused.
“You left us with that psycho senior last night,” said Nishi.
“Which senior?” asked Sid, perplexed.
“The senior, who gives tours and follows girls,” said Nishi.
Hearing it Sid got a laugh attack. Tears rolled out from his eyes.
“Why are you laughing?” I scolded him.
“What! Wait! I can’t take it any more” said Sid wiping his tears off. H
“No one, I know that,” said I.
“How come?” asked Sid .
“He was the one who helped me out with directions the first day” state
“Oh! So it was him who helped you.” He laughed again. “Silly, you ha
“OMG! I misunderstood,” I said, palm faced.
“Don’t you two know, he’s this year’s Mr. Fresher,” said Sid.
“How could we have known that when we were busy pushing that rick
“And by the time we reached, the event was already over,” snapped Ni
“Sorry! My fault” said Sid with hands rose up.
We all had a good laugh that day.

Next Semester was much boring, rather irritating I would say. One ever
“You look troubled,” said Nishi.
“Some people are damn irritating,” I said.
Nishi wiggled her eyebrows, “what Happened?”
“Nothing dear, I just rejected the stupidest proposal of my life.”

“Proposal!” her eyes widened, “who was it, spill out,” she teased.
“It was an idiot of my class. You won’t believe, he asked a common f
“He might be sacred. After all you’re so strong, who knows you might
“Yeah! Could have been a possibility.” I smirked. “But how could he e
”

“You angry because he indirectly proposed you or how dare he thought
“Both,” said I with a sickening look. “Let’s forget about that idiot. Hov
“Definitely not as eventful as yours.” Nishi laughed.
“Stop it,” I flashed her an angry look.

After that event few days went by calmly. That idiot maintained distanc

Few months later,
“Girls! It’s our last day of being fresher’s,” said Sid.
“Yeah, So what,” said Nishi.
“Smile,” Sid flashed an ecstatic gaze at Nishi. “We three are going to l
“He’s looking fired up already,” said I and laughed.
“I can’t wait to be in the new class. I’m really looking forward to it,”
“Duh! It’s just a new semester,” said Nishi, nastily.
“I wonder what kind of students will show up,” said I.
Sid smiled. “I’m sure there will be lots of pretty girls.”
“How can you tell? You saw the list or something?” I asked.
“I can smell pretty girls. My nose does not fail, it works like a radar”
Nishi laughed. “Ya! his sense of smell is really something when it com

CHAPTER-3

Sid The Joker

I'd not been a morning person since I joined college, but today

"Sid! Get up!" she shouted.

"Why'd you start the party without me?" said Sid, yawning.

"Party! We are in college idiot. Get up, we have a class to attend" saic

"What happened?" asked Sid rubbing his eyes.

"You were asleep and snored loud." I giggled.

"Oh god! Did anyone notice me?" asked Sid.

"No one noticed it," replied Nishi.

"Thank God! I'm saved from embarrassment."

"Now hurry up, we are already late," said I.

"What's the time?" asked Sid.

I looked at my watch, "8:55 am. Class to start at 9. "

Sid quickly grabbed his bag from the seat and moved out of the bus w

"Hey Nishi! Don't you dare tell anyone that I was snoring in the bus.

Nishi grunts.

"Don't worry. We won't tell anyone that you have put your T-shirt inside-out," I chuckled.

He looked down at his shirt and fidgeted.

"Argh! Stop it," Sid groaned. "It's fashion."

"Sid! Watch out!" shouted Nishi.

'BUMP!' Sid runs into a boy. "Walk properly you idiot," shouted that

"I'm sorry, I didn't see," saying so he moved really fast, leaving us be

"Sid! Stop! Where are you going that fast? Class is not that way," I sh

"I'm going to the washroom. See you in class," said Sid.

"Washroom! To correct your shirt?" Nishi laughed.

Sid replied to her turning his head back a little while walking, "no. To wrong it for anti-fashioners like you." He flashed a fake smile at her.

"Sid! Watch out!!" I shouted.

'CRASH!' Sid bumped into a girl who was coming out from the library

"I'm sorry.., I was in a hurry" said Sid and helped her pick her books.

"That's ok. I was in a hurry too," said the girl.

Similar plot when you bump into a member of the opposite sex, causing you're carrying in a hilarious fashion, then congratulations, you've just falle

Me and Nishi quietly spectacled the scene as we thought its best not to
“Hey! Hey! What the hell kinda plot are you trying to pull by bumping
“Plot!” Sid’s mouth got open.
“Ritika,” he hugged her. “Are you ok sweetie?”
“I’m sorry. Here’s your book,” Sid tried handing the last book to Ritika
Her boyfriend snatched the book from Sid’s hand and scolded him, “I t
“Well then, I’m in a hurry, so…” Sid starts to walk fast.
“Don’t ever show your face again,” shouted her boyfriend.
“Dammit! I’m not gonna run into anyone now,” Sid murmured and hurr
“We’d better hurry up!” I suggested and Nishi nodded in agreement.

We quickly walked and entered our new block, D. It definitely looked b
Nishi took a deep breath.
“We are finally 2nd year students starting today.”
I gasped,
“Not good. Having to go all the way to the 3rd floor every day, I think I
”

Reaching the last step to the 3rd floor, we went crazy looking for our c
Few seconds later,
“I have no idea how to find this class. But it’s not just because I’m stupi
“Just look for the palette of IT-B, silly” I said..
Nishi took a deep breath and said, “Dammit! Now where is this IT-B.”
I suddenly stopped and pointed at a palette, “Ah! There it is.”
“Finally!” sigh Nishi.
I peeped inside the class, “it’s empty. Where’s everyone?”
“I think they are late,” commented Nishi.
“Look!”
I pointed at the time table outside the noticeboard of our class, “first lectu
Nishi looked at her watch, “it’s only 9:20, we reached early.”
“Doesn’t matters,” I smiled. “Let’s get inside.”

After entering the class, we scanned each and every corner. There were
“Hey! What a surprise, I wasn’t expecting you two here.” Nishi smiled
“Hi,” said the two boys in sync.
“You were in EN, so how come here?” asked stoked Nishi .
“Actually I wasn’t happy with my trade and scored quiet well last year

“And you?” asked Nishi.
“I was already in this branch” said Sameer, flatly.
“Oh great then, It’s going to be more fun now.” Nishi smiled.

Meanwhile, Sid arrived with his T-shirt corrected.
All jazzed up he asked, “Hey girls, how’s the new class?”
“Seems good” I said, calmly.
Sid’s gaze dropped on the two boys. “Hey Buddy,” Sid waved to Sam

We occupied the second row and Sid took the last one.
I turned back to look at Sid. “Hey Sid! class is still not full, you can
“No buddy, I’m in the backbencher’s lot. Too happy here.” Sid smiled.
I turned back. “No backbench thing,” Nishi shake her right palm in no.
“OH!” said I with my lips forming a complete O.

Soon after, the class got filled. Every seat occupied by a new face. At
“Yes sir, I will score a 100!” blurted Sid.
“Introduce yourself?” ordered the HOD .
“I’m Siddharth Malik.”
All heads turned towards Sid. Me and Nishi got shocked by his audacit
“Tsk. But at least this means no one could be as ditzy as he is, right?’
“Mm-hmm!” nodded Nishi.
“Now I will have you start by introducing yourself,” said the HOD.
“Hey look, here’s the girl who bumped into Sid this morning” whispere
“Where?” I asked.
“Look at your extreme left,” indicated Nishi.
I looked to my left. “She’s also here, Good!” I smiled.

After the lunch bell,
“Geez… looks like we have got a weirdo in our class,” someone from the
“Who are you again?” asked Sid.
“Vibhor Singh. Forgot, you ran into my girlfriend this morning” he said
“God! He’s also in this class. It’s going to be an eventful year for sure
Nishi giggled.
“Considering how you are, I bet you didn’t fit in with your class in sc
“Yeah! So what?!” Sid snapped.
“Ha-
ha! Just FYI, I was a star player in my basketball club. On top of that, I
Sid ambiguous, “I can’t think of any specific examples off hand, but I
“What’s your problem?!” snapped Vibhor .

“What’s your problem?!” snapped Sid.
“Stop it!” shouted Nishi and dragged Sid from his harm to a corner.
“And if you dare lay a hand on my girlfriend again, you are dead; got
“Whatever, not interested” said Sid, nastily.
“Sid, that wasn’t nice. Try to learn a little restraint,” I said.
“We are in college now. You should try getting along with your classm
“Totally!” I nodded.
“Ok!” sighed Sid.

We three left the class and headed towards the canteen. On the way, “Why was that prompt jump on 100 percent thing before the HOD?” I asl
“I thought I’ll show off how cool I’m and stand out from the rest. I’m
“No,” Nishi whacked on Sid’s head. “Maggot, You looked a total idiot.
Sid started squirming, “my saga of popularity ended before it could actu
“How are you going to survive with that sense of yours,”
I laughed.
“You will get plenty of chances to boost your popularity. It’s only the
“Mm-hmm!” nodded Sid, happily.

As we walked into the canteen, laughing, I could actually feel some of It was hard to hear with the low roar inside. The air was thick with the s
“The smell of food is making me hungry. Let’s eat something,” suggest
“Here’s our old Sid, who’s always hungry.” I laughed.
“Fast! Open up your lunchboxes,” said Sid.
“You forgot your lunchbox again?” Nishi asked.
“I think so,” said Sid scratching his head and brought his hand in an a
“Keep your hands off my lunch,” Nishi slapped his hand, “I’m not shar
Sid looked at me, helplessly. “Me neither,” I said.
“Go, buy something for yourself?” Nishi suggested.
Sid went to the billing counter and after 5 minutes returned empty hanc
“Shut up!” scolded Nishi.
“I was kidding,” Sid flashed an embarrassed look.
“Nishi, there’s something I need to talk to you about.” Sid adjusted his
“How’s that?” Sid waggled his eyebrows at her, making me chuckle. “C
“Just eat a samosa or something” said Nishi, flatly.
“What are you saying, a samosa, it’s nothing close to a burger. Don’t t
.
“So first you suggested a bet when you already knew you had lesser sc
“It’s true… that my act of trying to force you to buy me a burger by

“Starve to death.” said Nishi, nastily.
“Okay then.” He took a deep breath. “I’m going to tell our underclassm
“Wait, don’t use my name!” said Nishi.
“What? A crush on Sameer,” I threw a sharp sideway glance at her.
“Stop!” Nishi handed him 50 rupees, “I’m not treating you. Make sure
Sid nodded in agreement and went to buy his love, the burger.
“Wow, Sid knew it too,” I whined at her.
“It’s nothing like that,” Nishi blushed.
Sid returned with 2 burgers. One half eaten and the other one in hand,
“Your burger?” I asked.
“I will finish it on the way,” said Sid.
We walked out of the canteen, Sid munching onto his burger and Nishi
“How you got to know about her crush?” I asked him.
“I didn’t,” he grinned.
“What!” Nishi’s jaw dropped open.
“So where did it come from?” I interrogated.
“It was a trick which got successful,” he laughed. “Every girl in college
”
“You are dead now,” Nishi groaned. Her eyes turned red of anger.
Sid and I, chuckled.

After the last class, me and Nishi quickly grabbed our bags and rushed

In the corridor of our floor, “Hey girls, wait for me!” Sid rushed to us.
“This class is really cool. I’m totally in love with it” said Sid, enthusia
“Oh really. In love with the class or the girls in it, huh?” teased Nishi.
“It’s none of your business, ” snapped Sid.
We walked out of the building and reached our stop. “You know that l
“Who?” I asked.
“The one with white top. She was constantly staring me without a blinl
“Probably the case of weak eyesight,” commented Nishi with a wicked
“Hey look, she is still scanning me,” said Sid.
“Where? I can’t see,” said Nishi.
“Look straight,” Sid’s eyes pointed to a group of 3 girls near the red b
“Did you see, she is smiling at me.” Sid blushed .

“Ok!” said Nishi.
“What should I do, should I smile back?” asked Sid.
“Do nothing” said Nishi, flatly.
“Excuse me! I asked Radhika not you,” snapped Sid.

“Look. Girls stare only in 2 conditions; she might either be admiring y
Sid looked at Nishi.
“In his case, I guess it’s—”
“Criticizing” said I, interrupting Nishi and laughed.
“Correct,” said Nishi with a kink.
“You too Raks,” said Sid, shocked.
“Sorry Sid, but it was funny,” said I and sniggered.
“It’s Radhika, you idiot. Stop cropping names” said Nishi, angrily.
“But RAKS sounds so cool.” Sid looked at me. “Hey Radhika, do yo
“No problem,” I smiled.
“Damn! You are so sweet,” complimented Sid.
“Stop flattering her,” said Nishi.
“Guys please help me out with that girl,” he pleaded.
“Ok we will talk to her and let you know what she feels, is that fine
“Cool!” Sid flashed a thumps up.
“Climb guys, the bus is leaving” ordered Nishi stepping inside the bus.

Next morning, Sid missed the bus. Me and Nishi were standing in the
“Sid’s late again,” said Nishi.
“Don’t tell me he’s still asleep?”
“Don’t know,” replied Nishi.
I saw Sid walking towards us, “Sid!” I sighed .
“Whew! That was close. I was almost late for class,” said Sid.
“What happened?” I asked Sid.
“I overslept.”
“Idiot.” whispered Nishi.
“Siddharth,” a low voice came from behind. Sid turned to look and saw

“I’m sorry for what Vibhor did yesterday,” said Ritika.
“You don’t need to apologise,” said Sid.
“He’s too protective and gets mad when something comes related to me
Vibhor came running, his eyes red with anger. He grabbed Sid’s collar
“Huh! Let go off me. If you pull that hard, you’re going to tear my sh
“Stop, the professor is coming,” said Ritika.
Vibhor and Sid went inside flashing dead shots at each other. Sid went
“Will it ever end?” I asked.
“Not in this lifetime,” replied Nishi.

The next thing we did was to try befriending Sid’s newest crush.

Nishi turned to Sid's crush. "Hi! I'm Nishi."

"I'm Radhika," I smiled at her.

"I'm Shreya, nice to meet you."

"Hi, I'm Mansi." said the girl next to Shreya, her friend .

"Did you like the class?" I asked Shreya.

"Yeah, it's good. Very funny indeed," Shreya smiled.

After talking a little and gaining confidence on her, Nishi asked promptly "Shreya! Did you see that boy, on the left corner be

She turned her head back and had a quick glance. "He's cute, what's h

Me and Nishi got completely shocked, it was the first time we heard s

"No. We don't know him," said Nishi.

"Did you see the boy next to the cuter one," Shreya whispered to us. '

"Hmm! He's funny," said I.

We couldn't utter more after her comment on Sid so, we kept quiet for

At lunch we secretly departed to canteen. We didn't wanted to confront

"So here you are," said Sid and sat on the chair in front of our table.

"Did you ask her?" he enquired.

"Mm-hmm," Nishi nodded .

"What's her name? What did she say? I know she likes me, should I a

"Easy Sid," said I.

"She's Shreya and she doesn't like you," said Nishi, sharply.

"You got to be kidding." Sid laughed. "Why would she smile at me wh

"I'm sorry but she thinks you are an idiot," said I.

Sid took a deep breath in grief and leaned back in his seat. It looked l

"You know she isn't good enough for you, a complete chatterbox." I to

"Hmm," that's her true colours," Nishi nodded in agreement with me. "Your typical princess is spoiled, self

He looked heartbroken for a minute and then "I'm hungry. I need to g —" Sid stopped midsentence as his eyes rolled and spotted a girl. He was tracked by this girl with long, black straight hair and a tight jeans who ju

"Girls, I found someone better," he followed her with his eyes.

"He's never gonna change," said Nishi and laughed.

"Nope," he winked at Nishi.

"I'll catch up with you guys later," said Sid. In a blink of an eye, he

"Lost cause." Nishi rolled her eyes. "That idiot has eyes in the back of

"Very true," said I and laughed .

In a moment we made a fool of ourselves. It looked now silly that we

CHAPTER-4

Crazy Nishi

A month later was the recap of what happened a year ago. Coming out

"Oh, fresher's arrived," said Sid.

"The new lot looks smart. Especially the girls, all are quiet fashionable,

"Hmm" Nishi nodded, "But this lot has more confidence and good look

We went to our class. Nishi looked quiet, something was troubling her.

"Why?" I asked, instantly.

"I urgently need to go shopping,"

"Not now," I replied.

"Please, it's a matter of life and death."

"Really! Then also, NO." I flashed a cheesy smile.

She groaned and pulled away, looking at me with the cute puppy dog

Skip with her? Oh crap I hated skipping college, that just wasn't me at

"Please," she begged.

"How long you gonna take?" I asked.

"Maximum 2 hours, travelling included."

"Ok. We will go after college," said I .

"Fine."

I loved my classes and was quite popular amongst friends. I always did

After the last class, Nishi grabbed my hand and tried to pull me in a

"Ok, do it fast we don't have much time."

"Where are you two going that fast?" asked Sid.

"It's important, we have to leave. See you tomorrow," waved Nishi.

"Tell the driver we will not be boarding the bus today," I shouted whil

"Ok, see ya" waved Sid, smiling.

We quickly took a public bus from the college exit and landed straight

Moving inside,

"Nishi, I need to call my mom. She gets really tensed when I'm late."

"Ok," said she and sat on the nearby bench. "You call. Till then, I wil

"Don't you need to call and inform?"

"No need," said Nishi adjusting herself on the seat. "My family doesn't care much."

“Call and inform aunty. You can’t roam like that,” I scolded her.
“Ok, I will” she nodded.
Nishi called her mom “I’m going to get late today, I’m shopping with
“Ok,” said her mom. Phone disconnects.
“Good girl,” I patted on her head and smiled.
“Mumma, I’m shopping with Nishi. So, I will get late today,” I said.
“Try reaching before it gets dark,” said my mom.
“Ok.” Phone disconnects.
“Now let’s shoot towards Globus,” I smiled to her.

Inside Globus, Nishi got crazy looking for cute clothes. She had to try
“Why do I had to come shopping with you?” I groaned.
“Sorry dear, but I can’t lose to those newbies” said Nishi firmly from i
“You don’t have to treat them as your rivals. They are just our juniors,
“How can I not,” said Nishi.
“But still, stop now. It’s not like you have got that much money to spa
Nishi came out of the trial room with a pile of clothes and said smirki
“Crazy girl,” I sighed.
Nishi laughed as if she got a victory on something.
“If you are done with shopping, can we go to our homes now,” I said.
“Mm-hmm!” Nishi nodded.
I headed towards the billing counter with Nishi holding a stack of cloth
Nishi smiled and after paying the bill we quickly headed towards our r
struggling with those dozen packets which hung from both her hands.

Next morning in my class,
“What was so urgent yesterday?” Sid asked from the seat behind us.
“Nothing,” replied Nishi.
I laughed. “Nishi wanted to go for an emergency shopping spree.”
“Why?”
“Because….” Nishi shot a side glance at me, indicating me to stop. “Sh
“Oh, competition.” Sid chuckled with the other two boys beside him.
Nishi angrily looked back to pick up a fight and saw Manas and Same
5 inches down the table. I could see her melt in embarrassment, her face

After lunch we quickly moved out of the canteen to reach our class. W
“Where are you two going?” asked Sid, stepping out.
“To the class,” answered Nishi.
“Don’t go. There’s no one there. ”

“Why?” I asked.

“All the students have decided to bunk next 4 classes.”

“For what?” asked Nishi.

“We are in 2nd year, silly. We don’t need a reason to bunk classes.” S

“Ok, but when did it got decided?” I asked .

“Yesterday, after you two left.”

Nishi looked at her watch, “its 2 we still have 3 hours for buses to lea

“Let’s go to the library,” I suggested.

“No way Radhika, I’m not reading anything,” Nishi revolted.

“Why don’t you guys hang out with us.” Sid smiled. “Come with me t

“With us, who else is with you?” I asked.

“Sameer and Manas,” said Sid. “Now hurry up, if we keep talking here

“Ok, let’s go” said Nishi, jazzed up.

Crazy girl. You just need to say Sameer and she would go all fired up

On the way I asked Sid, “what were you doing up when no one was t

“I was making sure that no one reaches the class,” Sid flashed a grin s

The canteen was scarcely filled, only 4-5 seats occupied in that 30 table room that too by couples chatting in the

“Hi,” they greeted us.

Usually it was Nishi who talked with ease to new colleagues but today school friends who went in different buses. Then Sid diverted everyone’s a

“I guess I don’t scare you now?” Sameer smiled at me.

“No,” I said quietly and blushed.

After few more minutes of chit chat, Sid interrupted us, “guys its 5. Le

On the way, Nishi spoke to me “What happened to you today.”

“Nothing. Why?” I asked, confused.

“You sounded so different,” said Nishi.

“Really?” I asked in amazement.

“When did you start talking that much too new fellows?” Nishi wiggled her eyebrows.

I smiled. “Those boys are good.”

“Mm-hmm,” Sid nodded.

“OMG! That stupid driver is leaving without us,” screamed Nishi.

“What!” said I in a complete state of shock. Running towards the bus,

“Hey! Stop! Stop!” shouted Sid at the bus driver, waving madly at him People dozing over each other when the driver hit the brakes. Thank good

As Sid was Manas and Sameer's friend, they both became our friends t

A few days later we had our first lab. Sid was troubling over computer
"That's good." I smiled at Sid.
"You know Seema, the girl that sat next to me in the lab," said Sid.
"Seema, that tall dark twiggy?" I asked.
"Mm-
hmm," Sid nodded. "She helped me out without me asking for it. I think
"Ya I know, I saw the whole scene," said Nishi with a smirk. She furt
"Radhika you know why she helped him?"
"Why?" I asked.
"Because Mr.
Sid was the only one there who forgot how to open the turbo C window,"
"It's nothing like that, you just being jealous," said Sid .
"Huh? Are you out of your mind. Jealous for what?" asked Nishi.
"Jealous of my happiness."
"Haha, what a joke." She faked a smile. "Sorry, but I have seen her m
"I hope it's not being nice and good for a selfish motive," I commente
"I don't think so," said Sid.
"Then it's good," said I.
"Wake up Sid. You are being stupid again," said Nishi.
"Fine, we will see who's wrong," said Sid, aggressively and left.

Few days went only with a formal hi, hello. Sid desperately wanted her
"It's been a month, you should propose her now," advised Nishi.
"Ok, I should ask Sam to help me in this," said Sid.
"Sam? Who's that?" I asked, surprised.
"Sameer," Sid smiled.
Nishi took a deep breath, "Oh god! He again cropped a name." Sid gri

In the lunch break Sid went to Sameer ,
"Nishi saying me to propose Seema. How should I do it?"
"You know why I'm popular with girls?" said Sameer.
"Because of your chocolaty looks," replied Sid.
"No, because I'm sincere. Sid, just listen to your heart and tell her exa
"Ok. Got it," nodded Sid.

That very night he texted her, "can we take our friendship to the next
course for a pea sized brain like hers it would have been difficult to unde

By the next morning, Seema had already broadcasted the proposal in th

Next morning in the class,
Manas walked to Sid's seat. "Hey! I heard Sid, what a reckless thing y
"I just figured, what if there was just a slight chance that she liked me
"Oh please, that's impossible," said Manas. "You must be quiet a bless
"

Sameer plopped on the seat next to Sid. "Your bad luck doesn't end h
"Yeah! Poor thing," said Nishi and laughed.
"It's all your fault," Sid scolded Nishi. "You were the one who popped
"Who told you to propose her twice," Nishi snapped. "The problem is
"You are a bad luck. Buzz off," snapped Sid.
"More than me," Nishi snapped.
"Stop it guys," I scolded them. "Do you have to fight at a time like th
"You are the target of gossip every morning," I said to Sid.
"I'm sorry. I'm causing trouble for you guys too," said Sid with a sad
"It's nothing like that and don't worry, people will forget everything in

In the next two days Sid was normal as usual, chasing girls of the coll
. Unabashed, Sid kept trying. While Sameer was struck by the charisma a
By the end of that semester, there was hardly any hot or average girl l
"Oh my! She's so hot. Wow! She's pretty. Oh! That girl should be my

CHAPTER-5

Tension Tension

College was good, as usual; our group was quite popular due t

He had those deep captivating eyes and the kind of face that stopped y

Most of our free time was spent in the canteen, were Sameer paid casu
— me, Nishi, Manas and Sid were sitting in the canteen for lunch.

"Oh, Mr.
hot is coming over!" Nishi pointed to the door with her eyes, "Look he is

I looked up from my plate and saw Sameer coming towards us with a

"My new girlfriend," answered Sameer. His hand crawled to my plate t

"I'm not sharing that," I said with a sigh, dragging my plate more towa

"When did you broke up?" asked Sid .

"This morning," said Sameer.

"And you got a new girlfriend the very morning," asked Sid in amazem

"She heard about my breakup, so proposed me today itself and I agreed

"Oh really!" said I with a brow raised, "so why broke off and smashed

"She was double dating. She had a boyfriend already before asking me

"So you dumped her?" asked Nishi.

"No, it was a mutual breakup."

"How do you manage these breakups?" asked Sid. He had a curious ex

"I start acting psycho and clingy to scare her away. I annoy and irritate

"Pretty smart!" sighed Sid.

I finished my food, hung my bag to my shoulder and said to Nishi,
"I have to go. Catch you later."

"Wait! Where are you going?" asked Nishi.

"Library," I replied. "I have a book to return."

"Wait, I'm also coming," Nishi grabbed her bag and ran after me.

After returning my book. I reminded Nishi who was right beside me, "
Her right hand toyed with the bracelet on her left wrist. She stared stra
.

"Nishi," I shook her arm.

"I didn't miss that." She started digging around in her bag, pulling out

We walked out of the library, I slide my hand down the strap of my b

“Yes”

“I’m noticing from few days that you are acting weird,” I looked at he

“It’s nothing like that,” Nishi shrugged.

“Really!” I eyed her. “Look at you. You have already gone all red and

I started tickling her and she couldn’t stop laughing, avoiding my hand

I raised an eyebrow, “Small! That doesn’t look anything like small.”

Nishi tittered.

“But what about your boyfriend. Are you planning cheating on him?” I

“No, our relationship is not that serious. Breakup won’t affect any.”

“Oh! Cool then,” I gave her a thumbs up. “Let’s get to the class silly

Reaching our class we sat at our usual 3rd row seat, “Uh..uh!” I rolled

“*I will*,” I smirked.

“*Please don’t. Sir gonna see*,” she pleaded with her mouth .

“*Fine*,” I smiled at her.

“You two seem to be magically communicating using your eyes,” sir pc

“*Look, I told you*” Nishi flashed angry eyes at me.

“Nothing sir,” said Nishi, quietly.

“Ok, sit down,” he signalled Nishi to sit back with his hand. “That’s al

The professor left and after 15 minutes when the next lecturer didn’t ap

After submitting our assignments we walked out of our block.

“I guess Sid will be late,” said I.

“Mm-hmm!” Nishi smiled.

“I’m going home, you coming?” I asked.

“Wait! Come with me to the library. I want some notes photocopied,” s

“Why didn’t you get them earlier when we went there in the lunch?”

“I forgot.” Nishi flashed a shy smile.

“Silly,” I smiled .

Meanwhile, in the class. Sid is still copying with 3 random classmates.

“Do you think Radhika has a boyfriend?” asked Sameer.

Manas gave him a confused look and Sam instantly got nervous, “No, I

“Well, she is quiet pretty and smart. It wouldn’t be strange if she had

Sameer puts his head down on the table hiding it behind his arms. “So, she does have one” he murmured, completely heart broken.

In the library’s ground floor, was the photocopy machine and the old g

“Bhaiya, do you have software testing notes?” asked Nishi.

“Yes,” he replied.

“Do you want them too?” she asked me.

“Nope.”

“One set please,” ordered Nishi.

He looked inside his mini steel almirah and took out a file. “Which pr

“Rajeev sir’s,” Nishi replied.

He flipped over some stapled sets and said, “Sorry, his notes are not th

“No,” said Nishi and we walked out .

I took out my mobile from my pocket. “It’s not opening, my battery gone.” I took a deep breath. “What’s the time?”

She slid her hand in her pocket. “Gosh!” completely terrified, “I left my phone at the desk carrier.”

“What? You forgot something again,” said I. “Aargh! How can you be

“Let’s hurry to the class,” said Nishi.

We ran towards our class and stopped at the gate when Nishi heard he

“Have you seen Nishi, the shortest one,” said a boy.

“Mm-hmm,” sighed another boy.

“She’s vexatious. Moreover, she’s so dark. Why is she that dark, anyho

“I wonder if she goes to a tanning salon,” said another and laughed.

“You morons!” Sid ranted annoyed “she used to be on the swim team.

“Don’t go spouting nonsense when you don’t know what you are talkin

“Sorry,” said they, apologetically.

Nishi looked all emotional as if she would cry any moment. After wait

.

We left our block and waited in the library for college to end. In the l “That was really sweet of you,” said Nishi, lovingly. “But why you lied?”

“What are you saying? I’m totally getting nothing,” Sid asked, confused

“She heard you scolding the boys in the class earlier,” said I.

“You heard it all?” asked Sid.

“Mm-hmm,” Nishi nodded.

“Don’t worry. In any case they will never figure out my lie.” Sid smile

“But why you lied?” she asked again.

“I lied because no one can insult you, except me.” He smirked.

I laughed.

Nishi’s face turned pink, from blushing pink to angry pink. “You —” she ranted annoyed.

They had a squabble and looked like two cute cats. Adorable.

Next morning, as usual our bus reached college first. Silly Sid, missed
“Good morning,” greeted both the boys.
“Morning,” returned us.
“Where’s Sid?” asked Manas.
“Dunno,” replied Nishi.
“Perhaps he overslept again.” I smiled.
“Indeed,” nodded Sameer, laughing .

Meanwhile, someone appeared at the gate. We all looked at the entrance and got shocked.
“Hey Sid, what’s up with that hairstyle?” asked Sameer.
With a shaggy bob cut he came closer. “What’s this smell?” asked Nisl
“I guess a kid wouldn’t get it.” He smirked, “its cologne. Co-lo-gne!”
Nishi gave him a flabbergasted look, “It smells more like a bathroom a
“Huh?” He ignored her. “You wanna know why I’m so cool?”
“Well, not really” said Nishi, flatly.
He ignored her statement and turned to us. “Since you are so insistent,’
Sameer grabbed his phone and read the text, “I’m in love with you. I’m always watching you.” That was what exactly
“A love text!” said Manas, shocked.
“No way! It’s for you, Sid!” said Nishi.
“But the text doesn’t have a name,” said Sameer.
“Do you know the sender?” asked Manas.
“Not of anyone that I know,” said Sid.
“Try calling it,” suggested Sameer.
“I did but it’s off.”
“Then you can’t dismiss the possibility that someone’s playing a prank,
“No! I’m sure she’s just shy!” Sid snatched back his phone and went t
“I guess he just wanted to brag,” said Nishi .

Sid removed his bag from his shoulder. Sat down looking at his phone
He blushed as he read. “I’m always watching you.”
“Huh? Wait a sec!” Sid mumbled, “does it mean that the sender of this
Sid suspiciously looked to his left and then to his right. “Who on earth
Entering inside the class, Mansi greeted me “Good morning!”
“Hey! You are early today,” said I.
“I was hungry so I woke up early,” said she.

Sid looked up at Mansi and mumbled, “could it be her?” He smiled. “(
“No!!” He came to his senses. Terrified he said, “she’d spend everythin

Sid came out of his imaginary smiling wide, “Oh, it’s my sweet goddes
Sid trembled. “But if she had written the text like that, well it wouldn’t b

“Argh!” Sid got frustrated. “Now every girl in this class looks suspiciou
That very moment, “Sid! I need to talk to you about fest activities,” sa
“Whoa!” Sid again went fantasizing. This time he saw his four suspects

Sid still in the dream, with both his hands on his ears he shouted, “Err
there are just too many to pick from! What should I do?”

His voice dragged our attention towards him and we all—me, Nishi, Sam and Manas went to his table. He had his head down.

“What the hell is your problem?” said Nishi.

Sid was lost in his thoughts, he wasn’t listening at all.

“Hey, Sid. You’re getting caught up in a fantasy world,” said Manas.

“Wake up,” scolded Sameer.

“Your brain’s definitely having a problem,” said Nishi.

“Wait… if, by any chance, it wasn’t any of them then…” murmured Si
.

He finally looked up and saw me right in front of him with Sameer an
“Raks?” he said looking down again. “No, can’t be!” he whispered, “th
“Creepy!” commented Sam with an awful look.

“Uh...” a sound came from behind Sid’s seat. He turned his head to loo

“I need to talk to you,” said Seema to Sid.

Sid’s face got flat, *could it be her?*

“What is it?” Nishi asked.

Everyone looked at her and Sid’s head oscillated to front and back in t
“I need to talk to him,” said Seema.

“I’ll give him the message. What is it?” asked Nishi again.

“Thanks, but I’ll tell him myself,” Seema snapped.

“It’s no trouble at all,” said Nishi, flatly.

“It’s no trouble for me, either” said Seema.

“It’s pretty crowded in the classroom in the morning so, moving around
“We don’t have to worry about that, right, because for some reason the
I took a deep breath and whispered, “the dream match is happening aga
“They are scary!” whispered Sam in return.

“What’s going on?” I interrupted.

Nishi ignored me and said, “that’s enough. I’m done listening.”

“It’s pointless,” said Seema .

“Hold on a second,” Sid jumped from his seat. “Stop it. Don’t fight ov

Nishi dodged Sid and shouted at Seema, “buzz off. No one is interested
Seema leaves with an angry look. After about 5 minutes the professor a

In lunch we stopped in our class, Sid was still in his thoughts. *Was See*
Seeing him thinking so hard, Manas who sat on the table next to him s
“What do you mean?” asked Sid.
“I think Radhika was right, It’s a prank.”
“No! It’s real,” said Sid.
Beep! Beep!
Sid gets a message. He quickly took out his phone and read the text, “I
block after 7th lecture.” Sid smiled and went into his dream world.
Me and Nishi went to his seat. “Sid!” Nishi shook him.
“Here it comes,” Sid smiled. “Today is the beginning of my sweet life.
“He clearly made up some parts of that conversation, didn’t he?” said I
“He must be really happy,” said Sam, sitting next to Manas .
“Well, his glory days are finally here, so let him enjoy” said Manas.
“Sid, don’t you have to go and meet Neha ma’am,” said Nishi.
“Oh! I forgot.” Sid left in a hurry leaving us laughing behind.

Our last lecture was free, so after the 7th class Sid requested us all to a
“Sorry Sid, but I have to reach the staffroom urgently,” said I. “Nishi,
“Don’t worry. We will try to hurry up,” said Nishi.
“You guys should hurry up too,” said I to the three boys from the clas
“I won’t listen anything. You two are coming with me,” said Sid.
“Ok. We will hide somewhere near,” said Sam.
“Ok,” nodded Sid.

They went behind our block waiting for the unknown girl to appear. M
Sid beckoned, Manas and Sam walked to him, “She has asked me to m
“So let’s hurry up,” said Sameer.
The three boys rushed to the class gate. Sid went in and the other two
Sid tried to act cool but inside he was nervous, “did you wait long?”
The girl stood up and turned towards Sid .
“Nishi!” screamed Sid. The two boys got shocked as well, their jaws d
“It was you who sent that text?” asked Sid.
“Well I guess,” replied Nishi.
“I was surprised,” with a flat face he said. “So you did this to get my
Nishi remained quiet.
“I get how you feel about me. So…” He flashed a stupid smile. “If yo
Hearing that Nishi’s face turned red of anger. She didn’t speak but sho

Nishi went closer to him and punched on his arm, “forget it.”

“Ouch!” Sid rubbed his arm.

“I was trying to be nice but you pushed your luck too far,” she said, a

“What do you mean?” asked Sid.

“The text wasn’t sent by me, it was Radhika.”

Sid’s eyes widened and the tips of his mouth instantly shot up. “Really

“Don’t assume anything stupid. That text was nothing but a prank.” Nishi sniggered. “Radhika’s prank.”

“Whaaaat?”

screeched Sid, feeling betrayed. “A prank.” He stood there in stunned silen

I came out from behind the podium where I was hiding. “Yes!” I gave

.

“Awesome!” whispered Sam and laughed. Manas laughed too.

I’m totally in love with her,” Sam mumbled.

“What?” asked Manas.

“Nothing,” said Sam.

They both came inside clapping, “great job!”

I rolled out my hands in appreciation and smiled, “thank you.”

“This can’t be happening to me. There’s no way that my first love text

“What!” said Sameer, confused.

“Sid, wake up. What are you saying,” said I.

“Was the shock so big that you lost it?” said Nishi.

Manas shook him, “Sid!”

Sid came back to his senses, blinked his eyes. With a sad face he said,

Nishi grabbed Sid’s arm, “let’s go, the buses will be leaving soon.”

We all went to our respective buses. In the bus Sid sat by the window

“Hey Radhika!” Nishi smiled. “How did you get the idea of this aweso

“I got a new number so, thought of using it in a much better way.” I

“Why changed, it was so good. I really liked that number of yours,” sa

“It got circulated too much. I was getting stalked again. So, I thought i

“Did you destroy that sim?” asked Nishi.

“Not yet. ”

“Can you please give it to me?”

“If you want stalkers. Then Fine.” I smiled.

“I love stalkers,” Nishi smiled. “I don’t usually get them.”

I took out the sim card from my bag and handed it over to her. “You

CHAPTER-6

Tension Continued

Early winter, a time when the temperature gradually decreases, and

"Morning sweetheart!" came a deep voice.

I jerked like a startled cat, twisting in my seat. Surprised into speechles

He settled back, looking at me sideways. "You look a little rough this

"Okay."

I dig my gaze back to my notebook, "if it's over. Can I study now?"

"Ya sure." He stood up and went straight to Manas who was studying

Few minutes later Nishi came in with a notebook in hand. "Raks, help

"OK. Show me." She sat beside me. I was busy solving the problem w

"Big trouble. "

I stopped and looked towards him. "What happened?"

"I can't find my glasses," he screamed.

"What are you on about?" asked Sam.

"Exam will start in a hour and I can't read without my glasses." He m

"He is hopeless," sighed Nishi and dropped her attention back to the nc

Seeing him stressed enough, Sam and Manas came forward to his rescu

He tried to recollect, "Probably when I was washing my face in the ba

"Maybe you dropped them in the washroom," said Sam.

I looked properly at Sid and suddenly my gaze hung up at his head. *W*

"Hey! They are on your head," Sam chirped.

Sid touched his head, "Yeah." He smiled the silliest of smiles, "thanks."

"Sid, you are such an idiot," Nishi laughed. Sid got up and went away.

It was still half hour to the exam. I tried hard on that problem. Droppi

We went straight to the staffroom and heard someone pleading from An

.

"I think I heard Sid," said I, surprised.

"Me too," said Nishi.

We stopped behind ma'am's cabin and peeped to see. Sid was on his k

"No," ma'am replied.

"Mam please, just one. I swear I won't tell anyone," he cried.

"Still no," she shook her head.

"Ma'am please," he pleaded. "If I fail this time I will

be kicked out of my house."

"Ok, but last time," she warned.

We were shocked. Sid came out of the cabin smiling, and we turned ou

"Such a cheater," said I.

After getting our problem solved we quickly moved back to the class. T

Three days later, all the papers got corrected and we were having shocl Awasthi with the test papers.

Mr. Awasthi placed the answer sheets on the podium and said, "when your nai

"Manas!" called Mr. Awasthi.

"Yes sir."

"Perfect score," said Mr. Awasthi and every head turned at Manas in amazement.

"Whoa!" mumbled Nishi.

"Nishi! Come here," called Mr. Awasthi. She went to the podium. "What do you think you are doing," sc

"Sorry," she apologised.

He handed her the answer sheet, "go, you need to work hard." She noc Awasthi left.

It was lunch. I went to Surbhi, the class topper and a good friend of n

She saw Manas leaving and called him, "Manas, please stay and help n

"Sorry, but I gotta go, I have a function to attend. See ya!"

Manas left but Sid and Sam stayed at her table. "Ah you can go. You …" she shoved Sam.

Sam got angry, "you didn't have to tell me that." He left too.

"As things stand, I'm gonna be a failure," Nishi stressed out.

She scanned the room, "Argh! Who else could stay and help me study?

Sid jumped in front of her. "Oh all right, fine then." He grinned. "I ca

"You got all zeros, didn't you" she scorned.

"No, I passed all except one. "

Nishi grunts. "I know how you pass." She pushed him aside and saw S

I got completely shocked by her sudden rage on, "What?"

"You have always been like that. You help out other people too much.'

"I'm seriously not getting anything. What are you angry for?" I asked.

"Didn't you gave your pen to Seema in the exam."

"So, what?"

“I got scolded because of you.”

“Huh? What has the pen got to do with you getting scolded?” I asked.

“If you haven’t given her the pen that day, she would have failed. And

“What.” I laughed. “Dear! If I wouldn’t have given, someone else woul

She smiled, somewhat dumbfounded. She understood her stupidity. “Out in the real wo

“No.” I smiled.

“That’s not what I meant,” said Nishi.

I rose a brow, “anything else?”

“Please help me study,” Nishi pleaded.

“For the retests?”

“Yes.”

“Hmm,” I pretended to think. “No.” I laughed .

Nishi’s mouth dropped open, “why?”

“You just lectured me to learn to say no.” I winked. “I’m a quick lear

“Ok, my fault.” Nishi laughed. “Don’t learn. Help me please.”

“Okay,” I smiled and called Sid who was watching the drama from Nis

“Okay. Let’s study together,” said Sid.

“Meet us in the library after lunch,” said I.

“Ok,” said he and left.

After lunch, me and Nishi went to the library and took a peaceful corr

Nishi dig out a book from her bag and opened it on the table, “Well t

“Huh?” I turned my head all around to find Sid. “Where’s Sid?”

Nishi moved her head to find him, “Where the heck did he go?”

“Don’t tell me… he forgot about it and went home,” said I.

“Well, let’s forget about him and start studying,” ordered Nishi.

“OK”

After all, Nishi cleared the retest and got saved from the extra scolding

CHAPTER-7

The Breakup Season

The start of the fourth semester brought in a lot of surprises w

The first time I heard about Avantika, the name by which he addressed

"You are looking too happy today, what's going on?" I asked Nishi .
"Nothing," replied Nishi with a smile.
"You didn't even shout at Sid. There is something for sure."
"It's not a big thing," said Nishi.
"Whatever, spill out?"
"Today is my 4th anniversary," said Nishi.
"What anniversary?" I asked, confused.
"4 years back the very same day, me and my boyfriend met," she said
"Oh!" I smiled. "So what are you guys planning for today?"
"We will be going for dinner and I already bought him a present."
"Aww! So cute," said I.

The very same day Nishi met her boyfriend. He called her to meet hin
Midway, stopping the fork to her mouth she smiled, putting her fork dc
"Our 4 year anniversary," replied her boyfriend.
Her face turned devil in a second. Angrily she said, "but instead of get
"are you toying with me?"
His head still down in guilt to his plate like a 4 year baby getting a s
"
"Fine, let's just forget about this" she took a deep breath. "I mean, it's
"I'm sorry," he said again.
"I never got dumped by a younger kid before," she said, cockily.
He Dropped his fork, feeling betrayed. "I thought I was your first boyf
She stood up, annoyed.
"You believed that?" She grabbed her purse from the table, "don't feel toc
She left, leaving the boy behind, still consumed in his plate.

Nishi was all grumpy the next day. After college in the bus, I asked h
"We broke up yesterday," she sighed.

“I’m sure he got frustrated by your tantrums,” Sid commented from the
Nishi remained quiet. I turned my head, “What are you doing behind u
“Listening.” Sid grinned, leaning on our seat.
“She’s in a bad mood. Will you please leave us alone.”
“Ok!” Sid sat down.
“Why did you guys breakup?” I asked.
“He is leaving the city to graduate.”
“What?” my jaw dropped open. “You were in a relationship with a juni
“Hmm, he is 2 years younger than me and is now thinking to get som
“Ok, forget it.” I smiled. “You are single now, hunt a college hunk,” I
.
“Mm-hmm,” she smiled.
“How about Manas?” I smiled. “Go talk to him.”
“I don’t think he likes me.”
“Why so?”
She looked at me with a sad face. “He never gave those interested vibe
“Maybe you didn’t see well. Give it a try,” I tried to convince her.
“No,” she said, shyly.
I pushed her, “go” but she clinched my hand and took me with her to
“Hey Guys, I just got a message from Avantika. How cool she is. You
“Don’t you dare start that nonsense again,” Nishi warned.
“Why, you jealous,” said Sid with a smirk.
Nishi grunts. “Jealous, my foot. I’m bored you idiot.”
“Nuh-uh! You are jealous,” teased Sid.
“Ha-ha! Who can be jealous with a non-existent girl,” said Nishi.
“Who said she doesn’t exist?”
“Then prove it. Why don’t you bring her to meet us,” said Nishi.
“Okay, this Sunday at Dominos. Wait for me there,” said Sid shoving h
“And until we meet her, no more talking her. Got it?” said Nishi.
“Fine!” said Sid, angrily.
“Sorry guys, I can’t accompany you. I have a date,” said Sameer.
“I’m out too,” said Manas .
Nishi looked at me and slowly nodded. “Okay! Then me and Radhika w
“Okay,” said Sid and left. We also moved back to our seats.
“Why are you so eager to meet his girlfriend?” I asked her.
“Because I know there’s no one and I want to end this monomorphic c
“Let him be happy with his imaginations,” said I.
“No ways, I can’t hear his stupidity anymore. It’s dam irritating.”

On Sunday, inside the dominos we were anxiously waiting for Sid who
“You’re finally here, you idiot! I’ll crush you with all my might,” Nish
He sat there in silence. It looked as if he would cry any moment.
“What’s wrong?” I asked him.
“Speak up you moron!” scolded Nishi.
With teary eyes and faint tone he replied, “she refused to come.”
“What. Why?” Nishi shot him a confused look.
“No tears please. Boys look horrible with them. Nishi won’t scold you
“Stop it. Everyone is staring at us,” said Nishi.
“So what’s the matter?” I asked.
“I made a mistake again,” said Sid .
“Huh! That’s not a new thing,” commented Nishi.
“I misunderstood her flirting as love,” he lowered his head to avoid ou
“I knew it. You are a total gone case,” said Nishi.
“Don’t worry she wasn’t nice enough. If she would have been a good
“I don’t have a problem forgetting her…” He paused for a second then
“But who’s gonna tell them, when we didn’t see anything.” I smiled.
“Who’s Avantika, do we know her?” pretended Nishi.
Hearing this Sid got cheered up. He Wiped his streaming eyes on his j
“But I don’t get it, after trying so hard why I never end up having a
“Because you act desperate. It scares people away,” said Nishi.
“Everyone knows about your desperation in college and after that Seem
“What should I do?” asked Sid.
“Go for suicide,” suggested Nishi and laughed.
“After you,” said Sid with a fake smile.
“Don’t fight guys.”
“Geez. Aren’t there any girls who appreciate my character?” said Sid, d
.
“I think you should look for your soulmate on social media,” I suggest
“Nice idea, surely gonna try.” Sid smiled.
“Surely try. You’ll fail, it’ll be hilarious,” said Nishi with a wicked sm
“We’ll see,” said Sid.
“Enough of this drama, can we order something. I’m hungry,” said Nis
“Go fetch something or else this little monster will eat us,” said I.
“And the bill is on you. A small bribe to shut our mouths,” said Nishi
We had two medium pizzas. Sid ate the least and Nishi tried to grab t

After the whole lot drama everything went normal the next day. Manas

Two months later came Nishi's birthday. Her first birthday with us all
"So finally your wish got granted," I smiled.
"Mm-hmm," she smiled.
"Looks awesome. "
Sid jumped from our seat's back and snatched her phone. "Wow man,
"Give it back, its mine," shouted Nishi.
"OK, OK" said Sid scared and handed the phone to her "why new pho
"It's my birthday present."
"Your birthday! when?!" asked Sid, confused.
"Tomorrow."
"Cool, where's the party?" asked Sid.
"I'm thinking of McD at EDM Mall."
"It would be good," said I.
"Done then," said Sid.
"Ok, tomorrow at 5 in EDM," said Nishi.
Sid instantly got fired up. Unable to control his urge to spill, he shoute
They looked up from the corner table. "It's Nishi's birthday. Tomorrow
"OK," said Sam.
"He already did your work," I smiled.
"Idiot!" murmured Nishi.

After college we were walking towards our bus when suddenly Sid said
I whispered to Nishi, "Are we by chance really bringing that along?"
"Even if it weren't by chance, he's in, no matter what," said Nishi.
"Well, putting that aside, gather at 5, okay? I'll leave you behind if yo
"Ok," said Sid .

Next day morning, I was half asleep on my bed thinking over when m
"I will mom," I stood up from my bed. "But first help me out. Its Nis
"Buy something she loves like a book or an accessory?"
"Mom, She's not into reading and accessories."
"Ok, then gift her a teddy."
"Yeah, Good idea." I smiled.

In the evening on the very same day, I got all prepared and left for th
On reaching to them, "hey, you looking fab," commented Nishi.
"Thanks, you look good too" I replied, smiling and handed the packet i
"Thanks." She smiled.
We waited outside for ten more minutes. "Sam sure is late," said Sid.

Nishi looked at her watch, twenty past five. “Maybe he ditched us to s
“Can be,” said I.
“Everyone is already gathered. So, leave him, let’s go inside,” ordered I
“Everyone?!” Sid shocked. “You didn’t invite others? ”
“No.”
Her no was depressing for him, “Oh god! how am I going to have a s
“Shut up and Move in,” Nishi scolded him.

We reached McD and took a peaceful corner table. We started chatting. He disconnected the call. We started our casual chit chat. Then suddenly I
I was surprised by her spontaneous question, “in what sense?”
“Like, I think he’s lively.”
“Lively is an understatement. It’s actually more like he’s made out of l
“Hey!” Sam came from behind and sat in front of me. “What you said
Shit. I closed my eyes. I wished the ground open and swallow me in.
“Yes it’s a compliment,” laughed Nishi.
Huh? What? I was being sarcastic. But I guess they misunderstood me.
“I’m so glad. I always thought you didn’t like me,” said Sam smiling
“No, you are wrong,” I said, trying to stop him. But he wouldn’t stop
“It wasn’t a compliment. It was a mockery,” I said.
“Hey! don’t you cover up now,” giggled Sam and handed a gift to Nis
.

No one brought a cake. Poor Nishi or can be said lucky she that she d

I tried to dodge the topic, “let’s order something?”
“Good idea. I’m already hungry,” said Sid.
“Orders please,” said Sam.
“Happy Meal,” said both Nishi and Sid in sync.
“Wait! what!” Sam howled. “Does that just mean you two are kids or
I pressed my lips together until the urge to laugh subsided and then I s
“I don’t believe that,” said Nishi.
“You should just go with each other to see if it works out,” advised Sa
Sid got angry, “why would I go with someone who had remind me of
“I don’t want an idiot like you either,” snapped Nishi.
“You don’t have the right to choose, shorty!” snapped Sid.
Nishi tapped per palm on the table and angrily replied, “If I really wan
“Ha-ha! Then I had like to see you do it,” said Sid.
“I will then, I’ll show you what I’m capable of. I’m going to find a b
“Oh!” Sid raised an eyebrow. “So it’s a challenge.”

“Yeah! I challenge you. Let’s see who can get someone faster” said Ni
“Let’s do it.” said Sid, determined.
“I’m not going to lose,” said Nishi .
“Me neither,” snapped Sid.
I interrupted, “If you two had your talking, can we order now?”
“Sorry,” said Nishi.
“Ok then, a vegie burger and coke for me” said I.

Sid turned into a hungry monster and ate a lot, maybe to cover up his
“Sorry, but I have to go. It’s getting dark.”
“Please stay, we will drop you” said Nishi.
“I don’t wanna bother anyone. It’s better to leave now.”
“It won’t be a problem. Stay,” said Sid.
“Ok.” I smiled.
“Are you afraid of the dark?” asked Sam.
“No. Why?”
“You said you wanted to leave because it was getting dark,” said Sam.
“Oh!” I signed.
“Then you are surely afraid of ghosts,” said Sid.
“No, I’m not.” I smiled. “In fact, I would like to see one someday.”
“Seriously!” Nishi shocked. “You are not afraid of ghosts?”
“Nope.” I smiled.
“Me neither,” said Sam.
“Nishi has phasmophobia, at night she even gets scared on seeing hersel
“You idiot! I’m going to kill you!” Nishi ranted annoyed .
I looked at my watch, the hour hand touched 8. “Guys its late. I shoul
“I will,” said Sam, smiling.
“I can too,” said Sid.
Nishi chuckled.
“You two decide, till then I look my gifts.” Sid and Sam left the table ar
“From the packaging, it can be a perfume” I guessed.
“Hmm! can be,” she nodded and flashed her biggest smile.
She began tearing the green florescent paper. Suddenly her smiled disap

Everyone laughed and we had a group epic pic, lingering over that clo
so many years, but who doesn’t have a click with that yellow jumpsuit gu

After the pic, we moved out of the mall and went straight to the car p
I turned back to look and asked, “what happened?”
“Nothing,” said Nishi.

“Something went in my eye,” said Sid rubbing his eyes.

“Is it ok now?” I confirmed.

“Yeah.” said Sid, smiling.

The parking was flooded with cars, Sam searched for his car but couldn’t find it. It was Sunday, it had to be

I laughed, pulling back. “Seriously?”

She shot me a look, “you know I’m serious. It’s late. A lot of people

“Don’t worry, I’m there for her.” Sam smiled.

“And if I don’t?” said I.

Her eyes narrowed, “you will.”

“Okay, I will.” I laughed at her look. “See you tomorrow. Nishi, Sid, b

“Bye,” they both waved at us.

Climbing in, Sam pushed opened the car’s door for me from inside. He jacket. I frowned at it, knowing I had one of my own. Why would he of

“I’m not giving you to wear it,” he smirked at me “I can’t drive weari

Nishi was still angry at Sid. They were walking for the bike parking w He gave a side glance to Nishi.

She walked straight with a flabbergasted look, “you pitiful mongrel, drooling while checking out Radhika’s dress.”

Sid got surprised by her words. His head turned straight. Blushing he s

He moved his head sideways and saw Nishi giving him a murderous lo spare my eyes!”

Nishi scoffed, “if I continue. My fingers will be contaminated.”

Sid removed his hands off his face, “Damnit…” Walking further, “do y

“No, she doesn’t,” saying Nishi started to walk leaving Sid behind.

Sid moved fast to catch up with her, “Maybe she has a boyfriend and

“No, she isn’t.”

“But even so…” said Sid.

Nishi stopped. “You should stop assuming things.”

“Huh? ”

She prided, “I’m the only one who truly understands her!” With a flat

Nishi looked at him. “Ew, How gross! Keep your distance from me, yo

“Hey, Nishi! What’s with your tone, you are so cold!” He walked to h

“Stay away from me!” Nishi shouted. “And since when have I *not* been cold towards you?”

“Now that you mention it…” Sid starts to recall.

Nishi punched him on the arm. “Ouch! it hurt.”

“Stop that crap and move fast,” she ordered.

They got the bike and left home. Their houses were only 1 km from th

Meanwhile, Me and Sam drove till midway where we got stuck in traff

“How long do you think this will take?” I asked.

“Why? you got a hot date tonight?” asked Sam.

“No.”

“So, what’s the rush?”

Admitting that I was seriously uncomfortable being out here would be e

“Or maybe you worried that I’ve brought you here for my own notorio

I came to a complete stop. Knots formed in my stomach. “What?”

Sam turned toward me. His grin slipped a notch. “Hey, I’m Kidding. S

Heat swamped my cheeks and the knots unravelled, replaced by a stron
”

“Jumpy?” he supplied.

“No,” I looked down to my mobile, letting the long strands of my blac

“Hey, reached home?”

“Not yet.”

“Why?” her voice showed signs of terror, “It’s been long now. You ok

“It’s nothing like that.”

Sam gave me a quizzical expression so I putted my hand over the mou

He widened his eyes slightly before giving me his smirk. “Don’t worry,

Nishi got embarrassed and immediately disconnected the call.

The traffic cleared and we drove further. I was doing my favourite pass

Sam was quiet, something was going on in his mind. ‘*It’s just the two*

He gave me a quick side glance, I was still busy with my stargaze. He
the speed some 20 points and I could notice it. His voice trembled of shy
Radhika,” Sam faltered. “Do you have a boyfriend?”

I remained quiet for few seconds. “Sameer have you..” and then turned

“Huh? No, I haven’t…” he replied.

“I believe that ghosts exist. But I have never seen one, and I don’t bel

“I see,” said he in a deep tone.

“And then, you see, I think of something the same way.” I shot my g

“I think…
I want to see them.” His tone went calm, “you see, I think that people w

“Huh? ”

“Because I think there’s a ghost out there that wants you to see it” he

“Maybe I’ll see one someday,” I whispered.

“Huh?”

“No. Nothing.” I blushed.

Few minutes later we reached my house. I bid him goodbye and quickl

Next day wasn’t like the usual days. For the first time my best friend

“Geez…

this is why you are still a kid,” he swiped is hand sideways on his hair,

“Oh really,” she poked him again.

“Stay away,” Sid avoided her hand. “Today I’m a new man.”

“Let me fix that for you.” Nishi jumped on Sid again and forcefully ru

“Don’t touch me, Idiot” said Sid, annoyed.

Nishi gave him a flabbergasted look, “trying to look cool, huh? , how sickening.”

He ignored her comment. “Starting today, my popularity is only going t

Nishi scoffed. “Suddenly changing your hairstyle won’t make you popul ”

“Same goes for you.” Sid laughed. “What good will it do to start wear

Whenever they had a funny squabble, I tried to stay away because thei

We were having fewer classes because of approaching exams. So, Sid s

Nishi completely ignored him and started thanking us and telling how n

“I’m hungry too,” I smiled.

We all went to the billing counter and Sid said, “one burger please.”

“One for me too,” ordered Nishi.

After ordering we returned to our table with the tokens and waited for

“Why don’t you two try going out,” suggested Sam.

“You share same interests. Your compatibility must be high,” he added.

“You should try,” I insisted. “You guys are same.”

“No we are not!” said both Nishi and Sid together.

“And in perfect synch,” commented Manas, smiling.

“No we are not!” said both of them again.

“Yes you are,” I teased them .

“It’s a coincidence!” they shouted together.

And then began their usual fight again. Ignoring us three they started t

“Don’t copy me, shorty!” said Sid.

“Don’t call me ‘shorty’, mongrel!”

“Don’t talk like that to a gentleman!”

“Don’t talk like that to a lady!”

Nishi scoffed, “gentleman! You are a gentleman?!”
“And you are a lady?!” Sid smirked.
“Shut up! mongrel” said Nishi.
“Shut up midget! Drink milk and grow taller!”
“Shut up and rot!” She started cursing him.
“Hey! what the hell is your problem?” he huffed. “You have been curs
“That’s right.” She smirked. “I’m going to curse you and make you shr
“I can’t help but think she’s been possessed by a demon,” commented
“You are an airhead,” snapped Nishi.
“You are an eyesore,” snapped Sid.
Sam and Manas were giggling.
“Please, can we have a day you two not fighting,” I scolded them.
“Don’t blame me. This idiot is spouting pointless crap and getting in m
“An idiot like you shouldn’t be calling me an idiot,” snapped Nishi.
Sid got irritated. “Just what is wrong with you? You have been upset s
Nishi gave him a dead shot. “Are you saying you really don’t know w
__”
“What?” Sid interrupted, “I gave you what exactly you needed. You sh
“Oh! I’m thankful for that.” Nishi forged a smile. “I was so happy that
“Right.” Sid smiled.
“Huh! You moron, forget it.” She whacked on his head.
“What the heck is wrong with her? Why is she so angry?” Sid asked
“I don’t think it’s technically called stupidity any more. You are insane
“Who gift’s a DEO to a girl. You dolt,” I added.
“What the hell. I haven’t done anything,” said Sid, confused.
“Oh boy! how are you going to live with that sense of yours?” Sam r
. “It is an irony.”
Nishi shot him murderous looks and Manas just saw them quietly. The
Oh god! Why is everyone after my boyfriend. First Sam and now Sid.
“What?” I asked him.
“In a country of 27 states, 7 union territories, thousands of cities with
“What’s wrong with that. I don’t need someone to make me happy whi
“Strange. It’s not possible that no one asked you out,” said Sid .
“I said I don’t have a boyfriend not that I’m not dating anyone.” I wi
“Mystery queen.” Sam laughed.
“Honestly, I had rather prefer to be alone than to be with Mr. wrong,”
“What kind of boy are you looking for?” asked Nishi.
“I’m not looking for anyone…he will find me,” I replied with a smile.
“So what’s your definition of Mr. right?” asked Sam.

Good question, He picked it right.
"He should be smart, generous and loyal," I said.
"Intelligent and generous…" Nishi gave a thought and then her eyes gl
Manas blushed. I tried to divert the attention from me "So, what kind o
"Anyone with a good heart will do," said Nishi.
"Good choice," said Sam.
"Manas, what kind of girls you like?" asked Nishi.
"Smart and confident."
"And you Sid?" asked Nishi.
"Any type, until it's a girl." He grinned.
Everyone laughed.
"God! he's really too desperate for a girlfriend," said I.
"Hey Sam, what kind… forget it you already have a girlfriend," Sid tra
"I don't. We broke up." Said Sam, immediately.
"And when did this happen?" asked Sid.
"Five minutes ago." Everyone stared him but then removed their gaze. I
.
"So what should a boy do to be your boyfriend?" asked Nishi.
Not again. I'm really going to kill her after this. "I would prefer someo
Sid got up from his chair and looked towards me. Nishi gave him a de
"What?" he jerked his leg. "My leg fell asleep." He sat down.
Sam stood up to leave, but stopped at my end of the table.
"What?" Nishi asked loudly but he ignored her. I tried to ignore him fo
"Don't even think about it, Sam. You're not her type," Nishi hedged.
Sam feigned insult, "I'm everyone's type!" I peeked over at him and sn
"Ah! A smile. I'm not that bad after all," he winked and left.
"Nishi!" Manas called. "You just told him no. He's never gonna stop n
"Hey guys I'm going to the library."
I stood up and asked Nishi, "you coming?"
"Mm-hmm!" she stood up and picked her bag .

In the library, I was searching for a particular book from a thousand pi
"What?"
"My parents are leaving for a distant relatives wedding. So do you thin
"Um sure. You don't have to ask. You can drop in anytime you want.'
"Great! I'll come over at about nine then, OK?" she chirped, sounding
"Ok." I smiled.
I found the book and we walked out of the library.
"What were you doing earlier," I said, angrily.

“What?”

I looked at her, expressionless. “Pairing me with Manas, what was that?

“Oh… that.” She smiled. “He’s a good boy and I think he likes you tc

“So what. You know I can never eye on your crush.”

She laughed. “I have a crush on every other boy. If you gonna think tl

“Crush on Sid too,” smiling I elbowed her.

“Just not him.”

“I know Manas isn’t into me,” she added.

“How can you say?” I asked.

“He never showed any interested signs,” she smiled. “So, you can have

“Whatever, Manas is too tall for me. I would prefer someone an inch c

“You are making a lame excuse,” she laughed.

We reached the college exit and after bidding byes we left for our resp

Next day, Nishi was happy that she was to stay with me but seeing Si

“Was that your plan?” I asked.

“Not in the first place but there are things we can do, and then things

“That’s right,” I nodded.

“Find someone, please. I can’t lose to that idiot.”

“You know I can’t,” and then I smiled, “If suppose I could, what kind

“Anyone. I don’t care what he’s like, just as long as he’s good looking

“Ok.”

After college we were going down the stairs, at the ground floor Nishi

“What?”

“Arrange me up with him,” she pointed to the bulletin board of electro

“Which one you want?” I asked.

“The shorter one.”

I looked properly, those two boys were from my first year. “What, both

“They share the same name it won’t matter. Select the other one,” I ad

I looked at her unamused face. “You serious?”

“Yes,” she nodded. “Why are you laughing? ”

“I don’t know but whenever I see him, I burst into laughter. Have you

We went to our homes and at night Nishi’s parents dropped her at my

I smiled back “I’m not. I just said that to stay away from Sid’s questic

“Oh,” Nishi grabbed my hand and made me sit next to her “do you ha

“I don’t know, there’s no one really special.” I smiled.

“Come on, you never had a crush.”

“Have you ever seen me acting that way over some stupid boy?”

"Umm – No," she shook her head.

I took a deep breath. "You know In order to fall in love, you need to

"If that is the case, I'm happy I'm not that intelligent," smiled Nishi.

My mother called us to dinner, "let's eat, I'm starved," I pushed mysel

"I already ate." She smiled, "eat and come back soon. "

I opened my laptop for her, "till then you enjoy some music."

I walked out from my door to the dining table. "Where's Nishi?" my mom asked.

"She has already eaten, so chilling in my room," I said.

Eating fast I returned to my room and saw Nishi fishing my Facebook

"Where's Rohit? he's not in your friend list?" she asked.

"No, but how do you know his name?"

"Remember you told his name in 1st year when I saw you laughing at

"Oh, yeah!"

She searched and found his account. "Look he's here."

"Are you still thinking on him?" I asked.

She nodded.

"Dear, he's not that good for you and I have heard he has a girlfriend

"I just wanna win the bet. I can't choose someone Sid knows. This guy

"No way, I can't. It would be really embarrassing."

"Embarrassing. Why?"

"I can't talk to him after I rejected him in first year," said I, flatly.

"Oh!" her eyes widened. "So that proposal was from him."

"Yes."

"Doesn't matter. It's an old story now." She sends him a friend request

I got terrified, my hands trembled, "What should I do? "

"Just talk to him," said Nishi.

I tried talking casually and in a few minutes I made myself clear that

"Nishi, I'm sorry. He still likes me. I can't talk further." I handed her

"Okay," she replied and we went to sleep.

Two days later her parents took her from my house. She didn't use tha

We left our bus after 2nd year. It wasn't of much use now. College end — me, Nishi and Sid were coming by our own.

CHAPTER-8

Never Ending Stupidity

Nishi and I were sitting on the last bench of our class, Manas

"Unbelievable! it's already the 1st day of July," said Nishi.

"Geez! I really don't need this." I hid my face behind my arms on the

"Yeah, you are right," nodded Nishi. "I didn't get to enjoy. I had to ca

Hearing us talk, Sam and Manas turned back at our table. "Well don't

"I also didn't get time to improve my physique," said Sam.

Sid came in with a smile, "morning everyone." He walked to our seat

"Hey take a look at this pic. I found this while deleting stuff from my la

"It's only the 1st day after the short break, don't come in with that fres

"No, it's not that" he showed the pics to the two boys.

"Oh, It's of you three in 1st year," said Sam .

Me and Nishi jumped from our seat to see. I smiled and remembered t

I smiled, the gloominess disappeared completely.

"By the way, Raks wasn't our 1st meeting really good," said Sid.

Before I could speak Nishi jumped in, "no, it was the worst." I laughe

"No, it wasn't" he shrugged. "It's just that I easily give people the wrc

The moment Sid finished speaking, our new professor Mr. Sen entered. He was an old man in his 60's. Sweet and polite. He was th

"Like you never do anything fun," laughed Nishi.

"The 3rd year of college is about studying and depression," said Sid wit

I laughed. "Like you guys ever studied enough to get depressed."

Nishi hits me, "let's go see a movie!"

"Ok," I smiled.

"Since you are too busy studying. We gonna go by ourselves," Nishi sı

.

"Hey, wait! I'm also coming," I rushed to them. "You know I don't study that much. Why you people behaving jealous?"

We went to see a nice movie. It wasn't what you had call a perfect er

At night, I got fever so I was absent for the next two days. On the 4th The lecture ended and before leaving he said, "okay, that's it for today. T

"Partners?" I said, voice low as I frantically looked around the classroo

I was flustered, “when did we pick partners?”

Sam was sitting on the seat behind me so, he heard me. “On Tuesday,’

My heart thumped in my chest as I scooted to the edge of the seat. *Sh*

“Radhika,” Sam called.

How in the hell was I supposed to get a partner now? I really shouldn

“Radhika,” he called again .

Where was the Professor’s office? I was going to have to find him and

“RADHIKA,” he said louder this time.

“What?” I snapped, turning to Sam. Why was he still sitting here starin

His brows rose, “We’re partners.”

“Huh?”

“We. Are. Partners,” he repeated, and then sighed.

“Partners, in what?,” whipping my gaze on him. I was sure I looked st

“Mini Project,” replied Sam with a smile.

He looked overly happy. His look gave me the feeling of me being in

Everyone left but I remained seated in my anxiety of how I’m going to ups. So contribution from his side would definitely be less than Sid’s girlf

“Why didn’t you inform me about the pairing,” I scolded her .

“I wanted to give you a surprise,” she winked at me.

“Surprise!” I scoffed. “More of a shock I would say.”

“Come on,” she threw her arm around my shoulder, “he’s not that bad.

I pushed her hand off my shoulder, “My bad luck.”

“You should give it a thought. He’s smart and generous,” said Nishi.

“What about loyal,” I said, promptly. “He’s a jerk. Only good for a fri

“I’m saying this because I have seen him reform. I haven’t seen him w

“That might be because of the exams.”

Nishi sighed, “how the hell can you be unaffected by how freaking hot

I pretended to gag, “Nishi, he’s just a friend. How on earth can you ge whore behaviour? He’s a big flirt” I shrugged.

I didn’t get why, but every girl in this college was in love with him, N round jerk.

Nishi flashed a grin. “Anyway, all I’m saying is he’s an opportunity yo

I didn’t even give that a thought, “why are we even talking about this? , We are just friends and share the same class— ”

“And you’re partners for the rest of the semester,” Nishi added. “Kind

My stomach tightened, “It’s not romantic. Nothing is romantic.”

“Liar,” she groaned.

I rolled my eyes. “Well, hello, Nishi. All I’m saying is that I don’t lik

“Okay, don’t be angry” she opened up her lunchbox and started eating.

I stood up, picked my bag and started to leave. “Where are you going?
“I’m going to the Library to search for the project topic.”
“Shouldn’t you be taking Sam with you,” she suggested.
I reached the class gate.
“He might be busy with his new fling. So, I will to do it myself.”
“And your lunch?”
“I don’t have time for that right now, Bye.”

I reached to a peaceful corner in the reading room, closer to the AC. I
Fi worked best there. I was about to search the net when Sam fell into th
I stared at him in shock, “what are you doing in here?”
“I was preparing a list of topics for us to choose from.” He smiled. “R
”
“Mm-
hmm,” I nodded. Nishi’s words from earlier slink into my thoughts.
Maybe she was right, he wasn’t that bad.
He offered a cookie to me. I denied. He quickly shoved it in my mout
I ignored him and he pushed one more cookie in my mouth, “I’m not
“Okay,” he stopped.
We had a quick discussion on the list of 5 topics and in 15 minutes it
“We won’t get much time like the other hostellers. It would be best to
“So from tomorrow, in the free classes; we will work on the project to
“Okay,” I nodded and shoved my laptop back to my bag. Carrying my
He stopped so suddenly in front of the doors that I nearly had a repeat
—and if you look at his class outline, there’s a lot—all by yourself?”
“Well! I don’t really want to.” I shifted my weight from one foot to th
“I don’t get what you’re saying,” Sam tilted his head to the side.
“What I’m saying is that…,” I trailed off. What the hell was I saying?
—
any of him. He was never serious with studies, always busy with his girlf
A brow rose, “Is that a serious question?”
“Yes.”
He stared at me a moment. “Alright, I guess I’m just a nice guy. And
I couldn’t tell if he was joking or not, but there was a distinct gleam
“And you’re pretty,” he repeated with a smile.
I blinked, “What?”
That smile had faded as he opened the door, ushering me out of the re
“I know I’m pretty—
I mean, that’s not what I meant.” God, I sounded vain. I shook my head,

__”

“Good, Now we’ve cleared that up,” tugging on my bag, he steered me

I ignored that, “what does the whole pretty comment have to do with a

“You asked why I’m so nice to you. It’s mutually beneficial.”

It sunk in and I stopped on the stair below him, “you’re nice to me b

”

“And because you have black eyes. I’m a sucker for mysterious black e

I stared at him with my left brow raised. “So if I was ugly, you would

Sam pivoted around, facing me. Even a whole step below, he was taller

“Okay,” Said I with a flat face.

A wicked grin slipped over his full lips. He bent his head down and w

A laugh bubbled up my throat and came out, sounding a bit hoarse, “Y

“Amazing? Astonishing?” He paused, brows raised, “Exciting?”

“I was going to go with bizarre.”

“Well, hell, if I had feelings that might actually hurt.”

I grinned, falling into the easy banter with him, “I guess it’s a good th

“Guess so.” He went down a couple more steps and stopped on the lan

I looked at my watch 2:30, Holy shit! He was right. Sam laughed at m

“Where are you two coming from?” Nishi wiggled her eyebrows.

“Library,” I replied .

After the last class, Sam said to me, “you go, I will submit the topic.”

“OK, thanks.”

Nishi smiled. “I told you he isn’t that bad.”

Sid was obviously happy. He has to be, he got the best partner by his

A month passed in peace. Thank god Sam wasn’t irritating. The project

I was too engrossed in taking notes that I didn’t notice who was asking

“Really!” he was shocked and smiling at the same time.

His voice diverted my attention and I suddenly realised what the hell lo

He was staring at me smiling looking overly enthusiastic “I wonder hov

”

Sighing, I cast my eyes to my notebook “I thought we were supposed t

“Cruel,” he said.

“What?”

“Nothing,” he giggled.

After a while we left to attend the last class. We were walking in the

boned just ran him over.

Still in that position Sam said, “you should be more careful. You almost hurt…” She moved her fingers

“Whoa,” I said. “you okay?” No response for about a minute.

“Hey,” I tried again, voice louder, “Are you okay?” When there was st

“Seriously, Seema, if you touch me one more time I’m going to go spe

“That was rude,” I laughed.

“She’s a pain in the head. She keeps on bumping into me intentionally. ”

Bending down, he picked up his bag and slung it over his shoulder. Kı

We were at our class door. I saw the professor coming so I left Sam a

Shit. He closed his eyes. He didn’t saw the professor coming. He turne

Sighing, he turned around, “joining the class, clearly.”

“Clearly,” the professor repeated, holding a set of stapled papers.

Moving up to his seat his eyes searched me. I smiled at him. He smile

The class ended and we all left towards the exit, “Nishi, you should ha

“What?” she asked.

He laughed. “Seema bumped into Sam. And he dropped her flat on the

“Really!” her eyes gleamed.

“Yeah,” he grinned. “Raks was also there.”

I nodded. “It was too amusing,” I sighed and laughed with them. We

My alarm didn’t wake me up so, I was late for college the next day. I was fearing from happened. My peace was in real danger. Sam was extra

“Running late this morning, sweetheart?” he asked with a smirk.

I gave him a drop dead look, making him chuckle , “Shut up, Sam!”

I went to sit at my usual seat next to Nishi, Mr. Sen entered the class and threw a bomb, “the first project presentation is

“Presentation.” no problem. I was good at demonstrations so it wasn’t a big deal for me. The project

“Meet me in the reading room after lunch,” I said to Sam who was sittin

He nodded.

I was busy making the slides for the presentation when Sam arrived. H

“You should go on a date with me,” said he.

Oh, he’s trying the same tactic of before but I won’t fall this time. I k

A slow smile crept across his face before he spoke.

“I haven’t asked you out with me,” his eyes drifted to the ceiling in th

I didn’t speak. He turned his head toward me, “go on a date with me.’

Transforming stuff he says. This boy is such a dope. I sucked in a sha

his. Forgetting everything for a moment I kept staring at him.

"Do you like me?"

I blinked slowly, "Huh? Yes."

Sam grinned. "Yeah… she likes me."

"What?" I quickly removed my gaze from him, "NO!"

Sam chuckled softly, "you really haven't been listening to me at all, ha

"No, I wasn't."

He nudged my shoulder, "yes, you were."

I screwed up my face, "you are so beyond the acceptable level of arro

"Arrogant? I'm just telling the truth." Sam tossed his notebook on the t

My mouth dropped open. How in the world was I supposed to respond

"Everything about me is thrilling," he said.

"About as thrilling as Mr. Awasthi's class," I laughed.

"Uh-huh! Keep telling yourself that, sweetheart."

"Keep calling me sweetheart and you're going to be limping."

Ah! He liked it. He smiled "Go on a date."

"I'm not sure I'm following this conversation." I snapped my laptop closed and shot him a hateful look.

"It's really not that complicated," he laughed at my hateful look, "We s

I stared at him a moment and then shoved my laptop into my bag with

"

I looked at him. He looked so content. He stretched his arms above his

"I know what a date is," I snapped, getting up from my seat.

"You said you didn't understand," he pointed out gamely, "So I'm expl

Frustrated, I crossed my arms. "That's not the part I didn't understand

"I was just making sure we were on the same page."

"We're not."

He lowered his arms. "So now that we both know what a date entails,

"Uh…"

Sam laughed as he stood up in one fluid moment, "that's not really a

"I…" A date? , A date with Sameer? , Two things rose at once: unease and disinterest, "No," I said, flatly. "Don

His brows shot up in surprise and he laughed, "A girlfriend? No."

"Strange. What happened to your previous girlfriend?"

"We broke up, two months ago."

"And you didn't get a new girl in 2 months. Unbelievable!"

"I didn't wanted."

"Whatever, but if you thinking. I'm not like that."

"Like what?" he asked.

“I don’t just hook up with guys for fun, okay? So I’m not interested,
”

I bent and reached for my bag, but Sam grabbed it before I could get

“I’m trying to,” said Sam.

I shot him a disgusted look.

Chuckling, he stepped forward and laid the strap over my shoulder. His

“I don’t think you’re a gentleman,” I said as my fingers tightened arou
“but thanks.”

“So, what about it?” asked Sam.

“What about what?”

He eyed me with the same intense interest he had earlier, “going out o

I stiffened, “Why?”

“Why not?”

“That’s not an answer,” said I.

“Why shouldn’t we go out on a date?”

I was really getting irritated now, “I’m not impressed by your boyish c

“Ok.” He was infuriatingly impervious to my rudeness.

I felt the vibration of my phone in my pocket. A text message? Probab

I ignored him. “Can we go on a date?” he repeated.

“Oh God, you don’t give up.”

“Nope.” He smiled.

I laughed, couldn’t help it, and his smile spread in response to the sou
in our college who want to go out on a date with you. Take them.”

“I want to go out on a date with you. Not them.”

“I don’t understand why.”

“I can think of a few reasons. You’re not like most girls. That interests

“No. Not at all,” I told him quickly. I needed to nip this in the bud. F

Sam didn’t look surprised by my response or undaunted, “I figured you

“Then why did you ask?”

“Because I wanted to.” He smiled.

“Okay. Glad you got it out of your system.”

His brows rose. “I haven’t gotten it out of my system.”

Oh no, “You haven’t?”

“Nope,” He flashed a charming grin, “there’s always tomorrow.”

“What about tomorrow?” he asked. “I’ll ask you again,” he smiled.

I shook my head, “the answer will be the same.”

“Maybe. Maybe not.” He reached out and tapped the tip of my nose. “

I took a deep breath, “Great,” I muttered.

“Knew you’d see it that way,” He smirked. “Don’t worry. I know the t

“The truth about what?”
“You want to say yes, but you’re just not ready.”
I frowned .
“It’s okay,” he smiled. “I’m a lot to handle, but I can assure you, you’
“Don’t you get it,” I scolded him 0“I’m simply not interested. Is that s
“I’m never gonna date you in this life,” I added.
He laughed, totally unaffected by my words. “You will. One day you w
“Ya sure,” I flashed a false smile, “In your dreams.”
“We will see,” he grinned.
“You’re delusional,”
“I’m determined.”
“More like annoying,” I retorted.
“Most would say amazing.”
“Only in your head.”
“Cruel.”
I walked away from him. He watched me heading towards the library’s
“I will make the presentation myself. Just be there at the time of displa
“But I wanna help.”
“Not needed,” said I and walked away quickly.
Back in the Class, I dropped my bag on the chair and collapsed next t

Standing there a few more seconds, like a creeper, he finally turned bac
“How do you know?” asked Sam.
“I watched you. ”
“Nice,” he laughed. A couple of seconds passed and then he said, “I as
Manas didn’t look that interested, “Okay.”
“She turned me down.”
His head swung toward him, his brown eyes sparkling with interest, “w
“Yep,” he grinned, “turned me down flat.”
Manas laughed so hard like he hurt his stomach, “I like this girl.”
“So do I,” he said, sighing, “So do I.”

After college I hurried out the door and down the building. Just when
“Have you thought about it?” he asked, slipping on his sunglasses.
“No way” I shook my head and went straight to the college exit.

Next morning, when I entered the class Nishi came to me “Yuck, RAK
“Good,” I said, smiling at my ensemble. My hair was piled on top of
shirt and blue jeans, I shuffled along in a pair of flip flops. The idea had

“I’m not trying to impress anyone,” I said “Obviously. ”

Sam entered the class with Sid. Sid looked at me and laughed, “what h

“She’s trying to be unimpressive,” said Nishi.

“Speaking of the presentation, have you completed the one for tomorrov

He didn’t bat an eye at my messy hair, and I frowned at his reaction,

“If you need any help just tell me,” said Sam.

“Okay.”

Much to my relief Sam was quiet for next few days. I was happy that

One day, I was talking to Nishi and Sid in the corridor close to our cl

Nishi sighed and stared at him longingly. “Will you get your stupid arn

“Didn’t you tell them?” Sam chirped.

“What?” said I, flustered.

“We started dating,” he flashed a grin.

My jaw dropped open. What the hell. When did I say yes to him? , Was I dreaming? , Did he actually said that? , I wanted to punch him in the face.

Nishi and Sid got a shock, “so, that’s how it was.” Sid smiled. “I was

Damn! What the hell was going on? , Someone please tell this idiot it’s just a joke. We were together for the project, nothing else. I wanted the ground to open up and swallow me im

Nishi head moved from Sam’s face with a smile bigger than usual to n

“Because this is the 1st time I have heard it too,” I justified.

“Hey Sam, where had this come from?” I scolded.

“What’s the problem? We have known each other for long.”

I jumped to hide behind Nishi. “No way in hell.”

“You are so selfish,” sigh Sam.

Nishi moved to the right, so I was not behind her now but straight in

What? My jaw dropped open. Everyone is crazy today. It’s insane. I wa you joking, right?” I said to her.

She shook her hand and smiled.

I shot her a murderous glare, “Come” I grabbed her hand and took her

“Are you nuts, what was that?” I scolded her.

“Having fun,” she grinned.

I wanted to murder her at that instant. “Please could you introduce him

“Okay, I will try. ”

Waiting there eagerly, “you guys are awfully rude,” said Sam, loudly, n

“Well Sam, you are really strange. So just wait a minute,” said Nishi, l

“Why is he doing this?” Nishi asked, tipping her head to look at Sam
“Don’t you think if I knew why I’d find a way to stop him,” said I.
“Point!” she agreed.
“Let me find out.”
“What you gonna do?”
“Try something” she smiled, “let’s go and talk to him.”
I nodded. We walked to the two boys waiting for us.

“Sam, I have a friend in CS. She really likes you. Desperately wanna h
Sam groaned, “No way! I’m trying impressing someone,” he stated conf
I was baffled and shifted uncomfortably on my feet.
Sid’s face snapped in his direction, “you’re impressing someone? , as in, like, seriously? , you don’t do that stuff,” he said, frowning and looking at him disbelieving
“I’m crazy about her,” Sam replied, shrugging.
Crazy about her? Sid looked like he nearly passed out. He was looking
Sam just laughed, “as of now, I’m too busy and off the market. So dea
Oh gosh! He was talking about me. I got scared and was about to shiv
This guy doesn’t get a no, idiot.
“I will. Wow, so a reformed man-whore, maybe there is hope for you after all, Sam” Nishi laughed.
“No way, I give it a week and Sam will be back to his old self, flirtin
“I don’t know Sid; he looks pretty serious to me,” Nishi said as I stoo
Sam smiled at me, he obviously liked what Nishi said.
“Finally, you’ve learned to use the head that’s attached to your neck,” S
She wasn’t in a mood to fight so simply ignored him. “I think its sw
“I won’t,” said Sam and smiled at me.
She saw him smiling at me and went into a silence for few seconds. S
“What’s going on?” he asked.
“Sam has fallen over some mystery girl who he’s crazy about, apparent
“Okay!” he sigh .
Sam got an idea, “why don’t you hook your friend with Sid? , He’s single and very much interested to mingle.” Sam winked at Nishi.
“He would scare her away with that face,” said Nishi.
“What do you mean?” snapped Sid.
“She is too hot for you.”
“Not that, about my face” he walked closer, eyeing her angrily.
“Stay away.” She pushed him away. “Your stupidity is contagious.”
“What the hell. You are the worst, midget.”

“Hey! don’t call me that.”

“Guys, Stop.” I interrupted.

“She’s vexatious, short tempered, fight-picking crazy woman,” commented Sid.

“If you keep talking like that, I’m gonna punch you,” said Nishi, angril

“I’m not impressed.”

“I don’t care about him. You little damn lame-faced. Get outta my sight,” said Nishi.

“That’s so mean, girl.”

“Come on, let’s leave the two idiots alone,” I said to her but she ignor

I saw Sam smirk at me from the corner of my eye. I murmur, more to

After college, Nishi and Sid were still busy guessing the mystery girl. I girls their interest started to build more. I didn’t wanted to be embarrassed

Though it was night, I wasn’t sleepy. Tossing my networking book on

I guess I could read something interesting.

Yawn.

My phone beeped from the nightstand signalling that I had a message.

It wasn’t.

Sitting up, I opened the text from Sam. Two words and I immediately

Hell, this boy never give ups. My brain oscillated whether to answer or

The response was almost immediate.

Sam: If u were Pinocchio, your nose would span the city.

Crossing my legs, I leaned against my headboard.

Me: Pinocchio? Sounds like your reading level .

Sam: Ha. U wound me. Deeply.

Me: Thought you didn’t have feelings?

Sam: I do. I have so many feels for u.

Before I could respond, another text came through.

Sam: When I lie something else grows on me.

Me: Gross, I’m leaving.

Sam: Don’t get the wrong idea. I’m talking about a moustache. A mous

Me: Oh! Thnks for sharing.

Sam: Ur welcome. Just keeping u updated.

Me: U can keep dat to yourself.

Lying back I grabbed the book again to give a short read, I texted bac

Me: shouldn’t you sleep now.

Sam: Can’t. Family showering me wid love. U could learn from them.

Oh god! This boy is so irritating.

Me: I think u get enough attention.

Sam: I'm needy.

Me: Boy, don't I know dat.

There was another span of minutes.

Sam: What r u doing?

"Not again," I whispered. Lying on my back, I crossed my ankles.

Me: Reading.

Sam: Nerd.

Me: Jerk.

Sam: Bet u miss me.

Me: Never.

I was getting a headache now. Answering his text was a bad choice.

Me: Bet u hav better things to do right now.

Sam: Nope .

Sam: Are you single?

What? ,I was confused. Why was he asking that? ,There was something Me: who is this???

I frowned as I sat up. And then,

Sam: Sorry, my brother just stole my phone.

I relaxed, Me: Sounds like a desperate brother.

Sam: He is. Sometimes. He's needier than I am.

Me: I need to sleep. Bye.

Sam: Bye.

He wrote that with a lot of sad smiles.

I did a short read of a page. It was twelve-oh-five when I ended and slid my book on the nightstand just to go to sleep

Damn! Not again. Why is he like this?

Sam: Are u asleep?

Me: Yeah.

Sam: Go out wid me.

Me: Asking me over text is no different from in person.

Sam: Thought I'd give it a try. What r u doing now?

I scoffed, Me: Dancing.

Sam: wish I was there. I love dancing too.

My eyes widened. What the what?

Me: I'm trying to sleep ,u disturbing dolt.

Sam: Damn. At least I hav my imagination.

Me: dat’s all u will ever have.
Sam: We’ll c.
Me: No u won’t.
Sam: Plz go out with me .
This is the limit. I don’t want this crap anymore.
Me: Get dis indented in ur brain. I’m never going out on a date wid u
Sam: I won’t.
Me: Then I guess I hav no other option but to stop talking to u right
Sam: R u serious?
Me: Yes, I’m.
Sam: Sorry, Sent he with a crying smiley.
Sam: Please don’t. Won’t trouble now.
Me: Ok. I need to sleep.
Sam: Good night. Tc. Bye.
Me: Bye.
I switched off my phone and slide it back on the nightstand.

As the days went by, we fielded the persistent rumours about a relation questions of our involvement, the stream of attention he received from his eds didn’t recede.

The project ended and so that stressful semester. We got a new mini p prominent feature for many. One morning, Nishi and me were talking in t
“It’s Sid’s birthday today,” Nishi reminded me.
“Oh!” I smiled. “Where’s the birthday boy?”
Nishi signalled me to look back. I turned to see Sid coming towards us
“Hey!” Sid grinned.
“He has got a really long life,” I smiled. “We were talking about you
“Oh! Thanks, you remembered it?”
“No, Nishi told me.”
He looked at Nishi, “Happy birthday,” said she.
“You remembered my birthday,” he said excitedly, wiggling his eyebrow
“Duh, we are neighbours. I heard the sounds coming from your house,
“Oh!” his lips formed a complete zero.
“So where’s the party?” I asked.
“Not today. I’m busy. Tomorrow.”
“Busy,” Nishi laughed loud “when did you get so busy.”
He took a deep breath trying to look calm, “Project.”
“Like you do anything in that project,” she sighs “its Surbhi who does

He ignored her, looking at me he confirmed, “tomorrow?”
“Okay.” I smiled.
“Tomorrow at dominos. Same old mall,” said Sid.
Nishi sneezed. “Don’t sneeze like an old man,” Sid scolded her.
“I think I caught a cold recently,” said Nishi .
“Hmm, it’s too cold!” I sighed.
“Just confirming, are you seriously looking for a boyfriend?” Sid asked
“Of course I am. Our challenge isn’t over yet.”
“Good. Keep trying, but it's me who’s gonna win this bet,” he smirked.
Nishi stuck her tongue out at him, “You won’t.”
In order to hook them up I asked, “So, what kind of girl you looking?
He smiled, “well, not the type who sneezes like an old man, at the ver
“When a girl sneezes, she should cover her mouth with her hand,” he a
Nishi dodged the topic, “at what time is the party?”
“Keep the time early. It gets late in returning,” I pleaded.
“Ok then, how about 2 in the noon?” asked Sid
“Awesome,” said I with a thumbs up.
“Okay, I will tell the boys then.” He left to his seat waiting for Manas
“Did you see him? His eyes were sparkling. I’m sure there’s something
“There’s always some stupidity going in his mind. Let’s see what’s nex
“Mm-hmm.” I smiled.

I forgot my lunch and Nishi knowingly didn’t bring in hoping of gettin
“What?”
“Look its Sid,” her eyes pointed straight in the middle of the room. It
tables and there he was, Sid exactly in the middle surrounded by around 1
“So, this is the reason of him being busy today,” said Nishi.
“Tsk. But at least this means no one could be as ditzy as he is, right?’
“Idiot, Simply idiot,” commented Nishi.
“But look, he is happy. So let him enjoy for the time being,” I winked
“We will see him tomorrow,” Nishi smirked.
“Mm-hmm,” I nodded, laughing.
“You know this world is made up of two types of people; who either i
“True and Sid is the latter case,” laughed Nishi.
“Yeah,” I laughed.

The next day was Sunday, we were to get a party from Sid. As decide
“I had like a margarita pizza,” Nishi chirped “But a double cheese wou
“What will you have?” she asked me.

When she didn’t get a reply she turned to look back and saw me rushi
4 pamphlets.
I smiled at her, “I got too many.”
“Don’t take them all, they are useless.”
“But it’s so hard to say no,” I said.
“Just ignore them and look away.”
“It’s so difficult to stand all day outside and distribute.” I folded the pa
“You are strange,” she laughed.
“You should call Sid and ask where he is,” I suggested.
She was about to call, when Sid came waving with Manas.
“Oh here he is,” said Nishi.
“Where’s Sam?” Nishi asked.
“On the way. He will reach soon. Let’s go,” said Sid.
We were walking when Nishi asked Sid, “how was the canteen party y
Sid squirmed, “What are you saying, there wasn’t any.”
“Really, but I saw 10 girls-” she stopped when Sid shot his eyes to he

We moved inside dominos. It was scarcely filled, so we took 2 adjacen
“Where’s my gift?” asked Sid.
“Gifts are for party on the same day. Birthday gone, gift gone,” Nishi
“Oh! so you convinced everyone, to not buy anything.”
“Yes,” she grinned.
“Doesn’t matters. I can say ‘better luck next time’” said Manas .

When Nishi didn’t tease him more he got relaxed and started bugging M
“So what are you doing this valentine’s?” she asked me.
“Just staying home,” I said, and then added my readymade excuse, “I d
“Understandable.” She picked up a rolled up napkin and tossed it at Sid
“What about Sam, what is he doing?”
Stupid question. How could I know. Before I could respond, Sid whipp
Nishi laughed, “I was asking Raks, what is Sam doing this valentines.”
“What’s he doing?” Sid asked wiggling his eyebrows.
Tucking my hair back, I shrugged, “I don’t know.”
Sid brows lowered, “what do you mean you don’t know? ”
“Um, I just don’t know and why I be knowing anyway.” I used two fi
The two of them exchanged a look and then looked at Manas.
“I’m just listening,” Manas rose his hands. “I don’t know anything.”
Nishi said, “I’m kind of surprised he hasn’t said anything to you about
Confusion rose. “Why are you surprised?” I asked.

Sid shot me a duh look, “I wouldn’t mention it, but the two of you se
“Oh my God.” I dropped my face into my hands.
Nishi giggled, “You scared her.”
Sid laughed. His white teeth gleamed against his tanned skin. “People ju
Nishi smiled, “everyone thinks, you two are in a relationship.”
“What?” Lifting my head, I stared at her. “I am not having a relationship with him. Trust me, he asked me —” I cut myself off. “We were just together for the project and that too
“Whoa. Whoa. *Whoa*.” Sid practically fell over, “he asked you what?”
“Nothing.” I sat back, crossing my arms. “He hasn’t asked me anything
Sid looked at Nishi. “Is it just me or is she just not that smooth to pu
“Not that smooth,” Nishi commented, leaning on the table “What has h
“Nothing!”
“Liar!” She punched me in the arm. “You’re lying! ”
“Ouch! I—”
“We are your friends. It’s the law of friendship that you tell us things
My mouth dropped open, “What? ,That makes no sense.”
“It is the law,” Sid nodded solemnly.
“What has he asked you?” Nishi persisted. “Did he ask you out on a d —?”
“Oh my God!” There was no way out of this. I knew Nishi. She’d just
She nodded, “I promise.”
I took a deep breath. “Okay. It’s not a big deal. Sam has kind of beer —”
“What?” Nishi screeched, and few heads turned towards us.
“Shhh! be quiet. Everyone is watching us,” I scolded her.
“Sorry. I just got excited,” she grinned.
“I can tell,” I said, wryly.
Nishi’s hands were clasped in front of her chest. “He’s been asking you
I nodded. “Mm-hmm, but I’ve said a no every time.”
“You’ve said no?” Sid said loudly, and I shot up and smacked his arm
Sitting back down, I eyed him. “Yes. I’ve said no.”
“Why?” ,he demanded.
“And he keeps asking?” asked Nishi at the same time.
“Yes, he keeps asking, but it’s like a running joke between us. He’s no
Manas seriously listened without uttering a word but he wasn’t stunned. .
“How do you know he’s not being serious?” asked Nishi.
“Come on,” I raised my hands. “He’s not serious.”

“Why?” Sid was stunned apparently, “You’re a smart and funny girl. A
I didn’t say a word.
“What I’m trying to say is how do you know he hasn’t been serious?”
I shook my head. “He’s not.”
“Get back to the important question,” Nishi said. “Why would you tell
“Why would I say yes?” *Could a hole open up and swallow me? Pleas*
Nishi smacked her hands to her cheeks “How can you be so judgement
Sid shook his head. “He’s not a serial killer. So going out with him
“Why are you two taking his side so much. Has he bribed you or som
They both giggled, “No.”
“I just don’t like him. There’s something about him which draws me a
Sid stared at me, jaw slightly unhinged. “You really don’t like him”
“I don’t understand what you didn’t like,” Nishi said “He is one of the
“He’s too flirty,” I said, angrily.
Her jaw dropped open, “What! Flirty.” She shook her head slowly, “Th

“Ha,” Sid grin made my anxiety rise. “Here comes Sam. Great timing l
”

Nishi’s gaze got hung up on the upper part of his shirt which had 3 b
“Isn’t he looking hot?” She whispered to me, leaning forward.
“Pervert,” whispered I with a grunt.
Nishi’s cheeks flushed several shades of pink.
I quickly picked my mobile from the table and opened the text box.
“Uh, what are you doing, Radhika?” asked Sam.
In my head, I strung together as many bombs as I could come up with
—oh, I knew—that Sid would not keep quiet. “Texting.”
“Texting?”
“Yeah.”
Sam tugged on the back of my chair “Why do I think that’s not what
He sat beside me. If I moved my head *just* a fraction of inch to the ri
“Are you sick?” asked Sam.
“Aw, he’s so concerned, too cute” Nishi exclaimed.
“Thanks,” said Sam in a low tone with a blush.
I lifted my head to look at Sam, “I’m not sick.”
“Okay.” Sam glanced around, and Nishi broke out into a fit of giggles.
“What’s going on?” asked Sam, confused.
Before they could answer, I jumped in “aren’t you guys hungry?”
Nishi frowned, “no-one’s hungry. Don’t dodge the subject. ”
I opened my mouth, but freaking Sid swept in.

“Raks has just informed us that you’ve been asking her out and she’s bee
“Well then.” The hard look slipped off his face, and I wanted to slide
Ugh.
“So it’s true?” Sid crossed his arms. “You’ve been asking her out?”
Sam cast me a sideway glance. “I have been, at least a dozen times sir
On the front of me, Nishi squealed like she was a plush toy that was s
Sam nodded.
Nishi turned wide eyes on me, “and you haven’t said a word?”
“I’m sort of offended,” said Sam.
I elbowed him in the side. “No, you’re not. And it’s not like it’s every
“But we’re your friends,” Nishi sounded so pitiful that I started to feel
Okay. I didn’t feel bad for her.
“I love you guys,” Sam grinned at my arched look.
“We also told her you weren’t a serial killer, so going out once won’t
Sam stared at me, amusement twinkling in his eyes. “Wow. This just k
I sighed. “He’s not being serious.”
“He looks serious,” Nishi said, all doe-eyed as she stared at Sam. He’d roped her in, dammit .
Sam made the most pitiful sound known to man, and I rolled my eyes.
“I don’t think you’re the next evil queen.” She smiled. “Besides, she ha
“Uh-huh,” I murmured.
“Anyway, this is not about evil queen. This is about you, Raks” She gr
“Oh my God.” I scrubbed my hands over my hot face, “aren’t you guy
Sam leaned on the table with his elbows, his brown eyes fixated on mi
hater in general, or do you just hate me?”
“I think it’s just you,” I grumbled.
He laughed once, amused at my mood. “I can’t figure you out. You’re the
“It’s not a ploy. I just don’t like you.”
“You wouldn’t care talking to me if you didn’t like me.”
My frown involuntarily smoothed and I sighed. “I didn’t say you’re a b
His eyes widened and he quivered with howling laughter. “Oh my *God*!
Sam’s deep chuckle crawled under my skin. “Go out with me, Radhika.
”
Stunned, I turned to him. I couldn’t believe he’d actually ask me out in
“Ouch.” He slammed his free hand against his chest. “You wound me.”
Nishi shook his head. “You’re an idiot, Raks.”
“Whatever,” I grumbled, grabbing my handbag. “I’m going home.”
“We love you,” said Nishi, smiling.
“Uh-huh.”

Nishi giggled. “We do. We just question your decisions.”

“I’m sure you two are bribed by him,” I said.

Sam laughed, “good idea. I’m going to try it next time.”

“I seriously doubt you are my friend,” I said to Nishi.

“Uh-huh.” She smiled. “Best friend dear. Your best friend.”

Shaking my head, I stood. “Bye.”

“Wait!” she said, jumping up and grabbing my hand “we didn’t eat any

“I’m staying only if you promise to stop this discussion.”

“Ok, done.” Nishi smiled.

Sid went to order at the counter. About a minute later my phone rang. the orders. They returned shortly with the food. We finished eating.

“We are seeing a movie next. Are you coming?” Nishi asked me.

“Movie.” Sid gave a surprised look .

Under the table, Nishi kicked his leg. “Yeah! Movie,” he laughed, slyly

“Are you coming?” she asked again.

“No, I’m not in the mood today. Maybe later,” I said.

“Me neither,” said Sam.

“Ok, its 4 pm. We are leaving for the 4:20 show.” Nishi turned to San

“Okay,” Sam nodded.

“Bye guys I’m leaving. Enjoy,” I said and smiled.

Of course, Sam was already on his feet, waiting for me. I arched my b

“Like a true serial killer,” he said.

I cringed as we crossed the dominos and headed outside.

“I can go by myself,” I said.

Shoving his hands in his pockets he stopped. “I have nothing to do rig

We reached his car and drove towards my house. On the way I said, “ —”

“It’s okay,” he cut me off, by midway. “I don’t care.”

Looking up at him, I squinted. “You don’t care?”

He shook his head, and I was sort of floored. What person would want .

Sam had a lot of options, so why not explore them? Maybe he was. C four-

seven. I always saw him with other girls around campus. The asking me

“Uh-oh,” he said.

“What?”

“You’re thinking.”

“I am.”
“About what?” he asked.
“Nothing important.” I smiled as I pushed away thoughts of him with c
“What are you doing this valentine? , Going out with someone?”
I shook my head. “I’m just going to hang out with a good book and g
“Cruel.”
“Huh?” I snap out of my thoughts to find him staring down on the roa
“Nothing,” said he and laughed.

We reached my home and coming out I said, “thanks.”
“My pleasure,” he said with a smile and I quickly moved inside my hc

CHAPTER-9

The Missing Love Letter

Few weeks after Sid's birthday, the cold subsided. It was March and fro
3 days Manas looked a bit gloomy. I never saw him that way. Something
Me, Nishi, Sid and Manas were talking outside the class in the morning
"Guys! check this out," said Sam.
We encircled him.
"What is it?" Sid asked, enthusiastically.
"Funniest video of the year" He opened his phone gallery and played a

The video began with a woman in her mid-forties draped in a blue sari holding a belan in her hand. She was running 5 slaps everywhere.
"Tu gar chal, main karati hu suicide tera." Holding his ear hard she forcefully dragged him inside the house. "Ouch! Mom, it hurts. I'm so
"It's going to hurt more once you are inside," she said.
We laughed till the video lasted.
"Awesome bro, where did you get this from?" Sid asked laughing hard.
"YouTube."
I saw Manas, he wasn't laughing. Moreover, he looked flustered. Not u
"Isn't this the same shirt Manas was wearing yesterday?" I said.
Everyone looked at him in shock, Sid pointed at Manas's wristwatch "a
Nishi looked at the video and then to Manas. Her voice trebled as she its true? It's Manas" Faltered Nishi. Sam nodded, smiling.
We were confused as to why was he beaten so badly and hold on, suic
Manas tried to snatch Sam's phone, "delete that stuff" but he kept it ou
"No, I would keep it as a souvenir," he grinned.
"This thing is on YouTube?" asked Sid.
"No, I got this filmed myself," said Sam and smiled .
"How come?" I asked.
"I went to his house yesterday. Entering his lane I saw aunty running a
Sid went to him and put his hand on his shoulder "I know how it feel being heartbroken," he said, heavily.
"How can you understand? You never had a relationship silly" said Nis

“But I got rejected so many times. So, I know the pain” snapped Sid.

I looked at Manas, really confused as to how a mature and sensible bo

“My girlfriend dumped me and I couldn’t take it. She was my first girl

“Why did she dump you?” asked Sid.

“Because she thinks I was too serious too soon.”

The lamest excuse I can ever hear. How can someone breakoff because

“Buddy, then she didn’t loved you. You should be happy it ended,” sai

“Really, that girl was an idiot. If I had a boyfriend like you, I would n

“She was stupid,” I mentioned.

“Show us her pic?” Sid demanded.

Manas opened his phone and showed us the picture of the girl. I was s boned dark girl. She had noodle hair up to her shoulder dyed in brown an line. Eyes as small as buttons and clothes, the stupidest fashion sense anyo

“You joking. How on earth can someone suicide for this thing” Nishi s

“Heinous. I would never date her,” said Sid.

“Seriously, it’s a crime to have a girlfriend like her,” said I and everyo

“How can you even propose to her,” said Nishi with a flabbergasted lo

“I didn’t. She was my neighbour. She proposed me.”

“That makes sense. No one can propose her,” laughed Sid.

“She was a party animal. But I always believed she would change.”

“Dude, you are lucky that she’s out of your life, cheer up and smile. Y

Manas mood got lifted instantly.

“Yeah!” Nishi smiled.

“Your mom is really cool,” said Sid with a wink.

She was a policeman’s wife. Can’t be expected less from her. But she

“Nishi,” I said .

She didn’t respond.

“Nishi,” I called again. “Don’t you have to go home.”

She snapped out of her thoughts snickering at me “Why are you snicke

“No! Don’t be stupid.”

“I can tell. You smell love,” I teased her.

“I was just thinking about Manas. He’s so nice. I feel like hugging him

What? I saw her with a puzzled look.

She looked at me “I mean, who in this world suicides for a girl. And

“Hmm!” I agreed. “So you love Manas, right?”

“You are kidding,” she gave a broken laugh “we had look ridiculous. A

“So, you love him,” I said that with a wink.

“Leave that. Let’s go home.”

Manas was absent the next day and two days after that. He never miss
“Oh, you mean Manas? , He’s ill” said Sam.
“But he never missed 3 days in a queue, no matter what. He might be
Sam looked a bit tensed “Yeah.”
“Why don’t we go check on him after college,” Sam suggested.
“Hey, you lot!” came a firm voice.
We turned back. “Mr. Awasthi!” whispered Nishi.
“You guys are the ones who haven’t submitted their assignments yet. I
“And if you fail, I’ll put a zero on him and the whole lot of you. Got
“Ok, sir” we nodded and he left.
“Whew!
He really gets scary at times,” Sid smiled and everyone laughed.
“Let’s go to see Manas in the last lecture, it’s free” I suggested and ev

After the 7th lecture we followed Sam, took a public bus to Manas’s st
“Hello aunty,” greeted Sam.
“Namaste! Aunty,” I greeted her.
Sam pointed to us, “they are Manas’s college friends.”
“Come in,” said his mom.
“Who’s on the door?” a voice came from inside.
“Dad its Manas’s friends,” answered she.

Moving inside, I saw an old man in the drawing room. He was so clos
“Tsk. Old geezer, his grandpa. Watches Astha channel all day” said Sar
.
“You kids go to his room till I bring something for you to eat,” said h
“No aunty. Please don’t. We will be leaving soon,” said I. others nodde
Headed by his mom we climbed the stairs up to the 1st floor and reach
He opened the door and she left. We went inside, Manas was wrapped
“How are you feeling now?” asked Nishi.
“I’m ok.”
“Hey, Manas. Doesn’t that make you feel hot?” asked Sam indicating to
“Not really,” said Manas.
“It’s suffocating. You should get some fresh air in here,” I said.
“I can’t,” he brought his futon more to him. “I’m feeling cold even wh
“That’s understandable,” Sid pointed his finger to a hole in the futon. “
Nishi and me giggled.
“What?” Manas looked at his futon, “you’re right.”
“Maybe you should buy a new one,” suggested Sid and laughed.

Sam got up and pulled his futon from him. “Tsk. Give me that! You a
“I’m going to McD,” Sid stood up “you people coming?”
I stood up, “yes.” Nishi and Sam started to leave as well .
“Wait for me!” Manas stood at once. Quickly pushed his toes in his sh
“What. You aren’t feeling cold now,” Sid teased.
“No. that was just to gain some sympathy,” he grinned making us all c
“Are you coming to college tomorrow?” asked Sam.
“Yes,” Manas said.
Smiling we went out of his house. We reached McD, ate and left for c

I wondered how Sam and Manas were best buddies and then remember
woman-man who prized thoughtful conversation above lipstick and high-heels. He was handsome alright, but inside he was beautiful.

Next morning, Sid arrived on campus, weirdly early for probably the fi
“Ah, Nishi, morning” said I.
Nishi got long waves, her hair were unknotted unlike other days. “You
“Nothing,” she blushed and made herself comfortable next to me.
I took two short sniffs. “Hey, what’s that smell?”
“Reeks of perfume,” Sid commented.
“Really? , Is the smell that strong?” she asked.
Sid nodded.
“You are a bio-hazard for wearing so much perfume,” said I and laughed.
“I bet you can kill bugs with that smell. Can work as pesticide,” Sid f
Nishi stood up and went towards Sid. “Hey, smell and insects have not she faced him.
“You stink,” Sid pressed his hand on his nose. “Don’t come so close.”
“But this is rather unusual for you to change your hairstyle and come t
__”
“Yeah!” Sid interrupted me. “Come to think of it, you never cared abou
“Did something happen, Nishi?” I wiggled my eyebrows.
“It’s nothing really,” she blushed.
I narrowed my eyes, “how suspicious.”
Nishi got flustered. “Its love, isn’t it?” I smirked.
“Huh? Nishi’s in love?” said Sid, shocked.
Nishi gave an immediate reply, “no, it’s not like that.”
Sam entered the class and quietly saw the drama standing in one corne
Sid gave a wicked smile, “TRAITOR DETECTED.”

Sid curled the fingers of his right hand and used it as a mike. “How y
“Yikes!” Nishi bit her lower lip.
“What’s happening?” asked Sam to Sid.
“She’s been brought in the traitor corner.” Sid grinned.
Sam looked at him, confused. “In this corner are those who get teased
“Speak up.” I pestered at her. “How’s the feel?”
“Oh god! It’s nothing like that,” she shrugged. “I was bored of the old
“Oh,” Sid face looked defeated.

But I was sure there was something. I was her best friend, it wasn’t di
Awasthi entered the class and Manas after him. He headed straight to the
“Radhika,
have you done the assignment?” she whispered in mock horror.
“Mm-hmm,” I nodded, smiling.
“Pass on. I forgot.” she whispered.
I handed my notebook to her, at that moment “Nishi,” a slow voice ca
“No, but Radhika has” she whispered.
“Raks,” called Sid, slowly.
“Yes.”
“I want your assignment,” whispered Sid.
“It’s with her.”
“Nishi,” he poked her “give her notebook to me.”
“I haven’t completed yet. Let me finish.”
“Pass on hers once you are done.”
“Ok,” she hissed and Sid laid back on his seat.
We were on the middle row. Sir in the front. Mr. Awasthi was too stri
Awasthi was busy tracing a whole program on the board, Nishi whispered
“Oh, so it’s a date,” I teased her. “I knew it. ”
She slowly pulled out a letter from her notebook and showed it to me.
“Wow girl, that’s so romantic” I whispered.
“Is love letters good? Will he be impressed?”
I smiled and whispered, “totally.”
“Good,” she said and sir saw her “Nishi, what are you talking?”
She got hell lot nervous and quickly shoved the letter in one of the no
“First pay attention to this class,” scolded sir.
“Sorry,” she nodded and quickly sat down totally forgetting about the le
Awasthi went and arrived Mr. Sen. As Mr.
Sen paid more attention to the board and less to the students, she got the
“Okay,” said Sid.

The professor was late so, Nishi left the class to drink water. After 2 r
“Raks, pass on Nishi’s assignment,” said Sid.

I looked at the support shelf and handed it to him, “Submit it too.”

“Okay,” said Sid.

We had no class after lunch so everyone left. I was alone with Nishi r
.

“After lunch,” she smiled. “He will message me when he’s free.”

“Who’s the boy?”

“Rohit.”

“Who?” ,I frowned.

“Rohit. Your old classmate,” she repeated.

“Are you mad.” I ranted annoyed. “I warned you then also. He’s a con

“I know,” she said.

“How can you be so stupid then?”

“It’s just for the bet.” She tried to calm me. “Sid doesn’t know him or

“Moreover, it was fun talking to him. He’s really funny,” she added.

“I really don’t understand,” I shook my head.

“I can’t lose to that idiot and getting Rohit hooked was easy,” she win

“You really don’t need a love letter to impress that moron,” I said.

“I do,” she said with a slow voice and I could immediately sense some

“I want to confess something,” she said.

“What?”

“He asked me to meet him because of you.”

“What?” I was totally confused. How come I get in the picture?

“Actually I was…” her voice trembled. “talking to him being you.”

“What!!” my jaw dropped open “You used my name.” I fidgeted, “You

“Calm down. It’s not that bad. ”

“Oh really! Its hell lot bad. You were talking to him for so long and g

“Don’t worry, just come with me. I will explain everything to him,” as

“I don’t trust you. You are the worst friend anyone can get,” I huffed.

“I will get everything corrected. Just give me a chance,” she pleaded.

“Ok. But I’m not going with you,” said I.

“Ok then, I resume to my old plan,” she said.

I rose a brow, “what was the plan?”

“I’m going to meet him. Tell him the truth. Hand on the letter and lea

“Stupid plan,” I scoffed. “You should have told him the truth before.”

“I’m sure he won’t say a no. I kind of impressed him with my chats,”

I smirked. “Don’t get the wrong idea, that idiot can be impressed by a

It was 2:30 when Nishi's phone beeped. She opened a text. "He has as
"Ok, go."
"Let me put that letter in my pocket first," she fished for the letter in
"What? Look properly it should be there."
"No, it's not" she looked at me in mock horror.
"Why are you so scared?" I asked her.
"Because I sighed it with my name."
"That's a matter of tension then. Maybe you dropped it in class," I saic looked at our support shelf. Under our table and then crazily searched for
Nishi screamed, "it's not here."
"Wait! When did you last saw that letter?" I asked.
"When Mr. Awasthi called me, I put that in —" she trailed off and quickly searched for her notebook in her bag.
"My assignment notebook, where is it?" she said loudly, terrified.
"What! It was in that." I pressed my head with my palm. "I gave it to Sid. Call him quickly."
"God! You are a stupidity queen," I added.
She called Sid. "His phone is unreachable. What should I do now." She
"Then call Sam and ask where Sid is."
She quickly dialled Sam's number "Hello Sameer. Where's Sid?"
"He went home."
"My assignment?"
"Submitted."
"Ok, bye."
Nishi looked at me in horror, "he submitted the assignment"
"Awesome," I scolded her. "What are you going to do now?"
She cleared her thoughts, "I have to get the letter back before Mr. Awasthi finds it."
"You mean you are going to sneak into his office" I asked, shocked.
"I have no other option" she looked at her watch. "2:45. Rohit will be
"No way," I countered.
"Please," she pleaded .
"Hey!" I shouted. "Don't bring me into your little love nest."
Her eyes got wet, she was about to shed tears. "Please?" she begged w
"Ok, don't cry here." I was about to say more when her phone beep ir "doctor, what happened?" she got an immediate reply "I'm having fever."
"Good," I smiled of relief. "Tell him to take rest and plan to meet son
She texted him, "take rest. I'll meet you later."
She got an immediate reply, "no, I'm done. Coming in 2 minutes."

What the hell? I sweat in anxiety, “but Nishi what am I going to say t
“It’s simple,” she smiled. “You just need to talk less. Just ask and smil
“But ask what?” I frowned.
“His likes, hobby, family, anything. Just keep him busy till I reach.”
“Ok, but come fast. If you get late. I‘ll leave.”
“Ok, I’ll be there. Now run.”

I speed walked to the canteen. He didn’t arrive by then. I took a seat
“Hi!” said Rohit. And my gaze lifted from my mobile to his stupid pale f
.

There were moments in my life where I had no idea how I got where

It was too difficult to sit there and talk to an idiot who you never war
“I’m outside staffroom waiting for sir to leave. Will be there soon.”
He returned with 2 frooti’s. I tried to scare him away by being boring but he looked impervious. Nishi words flashed. Just ask,
“Oh!” I nodded like I had a clue what any of that meant.
He then told me that he dropped his school friend, Barkha which was i
She texted back, “Leaving. Will be there in 5 minutes.”
I took a breath in relief, just 5 minutes, I can handle that .
I smiled and then asked about his family which was a mistake I did. S
I looked at my watch, it was 20 minutes past that message. I couldn’t
“I’m in the bus, going home. He left. Talk to you later.”
After an hour I got her call again.
“Hey! you reached home?” asked Nishi.
“Yes, half hour ago.”
“I just reached.”
“Okay.”
“How was it?” she asked.
“Shut up, why didn’t you arrive?”
“Mr.
Awasthi caught me coming out of his office and then I had a good scoldi
“Did you get the letter?” I asked.
“No, it’s with Sid. Sir said after checking, Sid took the notebooks with
“That’s good.”
“Coming to college tomorrow?” Nishi asked.
“Sure, if my head stops hurting. That nincompoop got me headache. Se
She laughed, “Poor girl.”
“And I forgot, that moron was asking the route to railway station. So t

“Ok,” she said .
“Wait!” I shouted.
“Just give him the wrong route and let him disappear forever,” I laughe
She laughed, “I guess he irritated you to hell.”
“Yeah. Now buzz off you too, I need some sleep.”

After disconnecting the call, Nishi messaged Rohit and went straight to
“I want my assignment notebook,” said Nishi.
“Wait Here. I’m bringing,” Sid went in and after a minute returned wit
“Which letter?” he asked, surprised.
“The one which was in my notebook.”
“I didn’t see any.”
“You lying,” said Nishi.
“I swear, I know nothing of any letter. I didn’t see any.”
“Okay,” she left his house.

I had just fallen asleep when my phone rang. I looked at the screen wi
“Please die,” I murmured. This girl can’t let me sleep in peace. I reject

The next morning when I entered the class, Nishi came in running. “Ra
“Wait, catch your breath. What happened?”
“It’s not with Sid,” she said .

“What? ,
How can the letter just disappear to nowhere? Did it get legs?”
I got scared too but then I an idea stuck me. “Just forget it. It’s not a bi
Nishi face gleamed. “Wow, you rock. That’s an awesome idea.” She hu
“Easy girl.” I pulled her back. “We are in class. Others will be coming
Sid entered smiling. He saw her hugging me. He handed me my notebo
“Thanks,” I smiled.
Sid went to sit and I flipped the pages to confirm if it was there. “You
“Mm-hmm,” Nishi grinned.

After having our lunch, me and Nishi were talking in the class when M
“I need to have a word,” said Manas, calmly. “Come with me.”
“Okay.” They moved out of the class and walked to the corridor. They
After Manas left Nishi ran straight to me. She scrambled to her feat, so
I thought some shock made her go mad. “Nishi, what in the world just
She wiggled the letter showing me, “Where did you get this?” I asked
.

Before she could answer, Sid jerked the letter sharply out of her hand and ran in the class. “That’s

“What’s in there?” Sid sneered. Nishi caught him but he held it high o

“Oh, a love letter” Sid smirked.

“You moron, give it back to me” Nishi shouted trying to snatch again.

I went straight to them and snatched the letter, “Enough Sid,” I scolded him. Defeated he left the class. I handed the letter back to her,

We went to sit at our seat. “So, where I was” I tried to remember “oh

She smiled, “It was in my assignment notebook. Manas found it and ke

“Okay I got it.” I smiled. “So Sid asked the notebook for Manas. After

Nishi nodded, happily.

“But why are you so happy?” I asked, flustered. *What was there to lau*

“Manas thought that letter was for him and loved the idea. We are now

“Oho, lucky girl” I teased her.

She smiled widely, but then her face grew troubled, “Oh gosh,” she uttered pressing her palm hard on her forehead.

“What happened?” I asked.

“Rohit.”

“Where?” I frantically looked at the corridor .

“He’s not here but what should I do now?”

“First, bring me out of your mess. Tell Rohit the truth,” I said.

“Yes I will,” said Nishi and typed on her mobile but then backspaced t

“Now What?” I asked.

“I once saw Manas talking to Rohit. I guess they are friends. If I tell I “I don’t wanna lose him but I can’t tarnish your image as well.” A tear c

I wiped the tear off her cheek, “don’t worry. I have a solution.” I smil

“Really!” she stood up at once, “you are a keeper. You always come u

“Buttering,” I smirked.

Nishi giggled.

“Forget you ever talked to him,” I said.

She looked at me, perplexed. “I didn’t get you.”

“I mean, let him think it was me who was chatting.”

“But that’s wrong. I have to clear it out,” she insisted.

“Listen! I really don’t have any problem.”

“I can’t be that selfish. I will tell him and whatever happens next, I wi

“Sweetie he doesn’t matters to me, so I don’t give a damn at what he

“You sure?”

I nodded. She hugged me tight. “You are the bestest friend anyone can ”

“But I hate you.” I laughed.
She didn’t move back. “Okay, that’s enough. Two hugs in a day. I can
“And if he asks you out again just in case, but I’m sure he won’t, bec
“I guess ignoring won’t work. Did it work on Sam?”
“No,” I said.
“Hey, I got it” her eyes sparkled “how about clingy, Sam’s idea” she v
“Cool,” said I with a wink. “This whole date stuff will be our secret fo
“Okay,” she smiled.
“Now enjoy.” I ruffled her hair “silly girl.”
“My hair. Now I have to set them again.”
“That’s a small punishment for your idiocy,” I stuck my tongue out at

The next morning Nishi announced to Sid about her dating Manas. Nish
“Crap! I lost to that damn Nishi,” he pushed his lower lip forward.
“How long are you going to mope for?” I laughed. “Come on, cheer up
“Okay!” said he and we all left to your houses.

It was an eventful week, a lot happened. Nishi was happy. Sid tried to

There was almost 30cm difference in their heights because of that, they

CHAPTER-10

Cupid Again

Monday; two weeks before February. We were in the computer

"Stop looking, dummy, he's going to see you." I Scolded.
Nishi smiled and waved. "He's already seen me."
"He's still staring," said Nishi. I hesitated for a moment, and then final
I returned his smile, and then pretended to type something on my comp
"Yes," she giggled.

After lab, Nishi and I made our way down the stairs from the 3rd floor
"What's so funny?" asked Sid.
"Oh, a guy in the lab was staring at Radhika all hour. It was adorable.
"Who was it?" Sam grimaced.
I readjusted my backpack, prompting Sam to slide it off my arms and
"Raks! you big fat liar! It was Rohan, and he
was being *so* obvious. The guy was practically drooling," said Nishi .

Sam's expression twisted into disgust, "Rohan Sharma?"
Nishi nodded, laughing.
A minute later Rohan stopped me in the hall, "Radhika."
Sam was glaring at him, and I had the impression he was trying to sho
"Yes" I replied, subsiding my laugh that was building up inside.
"We will be going now," Nishi grabbed the two boys and took them a
"We have never talked much," said Rohan.
"Mm-hmm."
"Are you free this weekend?" he asked.
"Actually I have plans this weekend."
"Then what about next week?"
What the hell am I going to say? Without being too obvious, I frantica
"Hurry up! we are getting late" Sam said, loudly.
"Coming" I said, loudly. What a relief. I was happy he interrupted. At
"Got to go. I'll tell you later," I smiled and rushed towards them. Roha
"You traitor," I whacked hard at Nishi's arm.
"Ouch, I just thought we'd be in your way" said Nishi rubbing her arm
.
"Your concern was completely unnecessary," I scoffed. We all walked t

The end of next day wouldn’t be called a perfect end. Rohan tried to t

I was a bit irritated, so skipped college the next day. On Thursday, I w
absolutely loathed being late. I hated for people to turn and stare, which t
my nine-
thirty class began but today I wasn’t late so why the class was staring at

In the lunch break, Nishi left to drink water and Surbhi came to me. “
“What?” ,my jaw dropped open “we aren’t.”
“Hot and smart. You’ve got a real winner on your hands, Radhika!” Su
”
I saw Nishi coming back, “please excuse me.” I walked straight to her.
“Do what?,” she said, flustered.
“Imaginary pair me up with Sam when you know I’m not into him,” I
“It wasn’t me,” said Nishi.
“Now I’m mad. If you didn’t do it, then who else would.”
“It was Sam,” said Nishi.
My eyes widened “Why didn’t you inform me?”
“He told me yesterday that you two are dating but I thought it was a j
I stood there in stunned silence, but beyond the shock, anger simmered
burning brushfire. I angrily went to Sam. I grabbed his arm and dragged h
“Stop sprouting crap about me,” I scolded him. “If it’s a joke, stop it n
He shook his head and smiled.
“When did I kiss you? , where and when?,” I frowned.
“Oh dear, don’t you remember” he blushed. “A night before yesterday w
What the hell, earlier Rohan was irritating me and now Sam. “Are you
He nodded, smiling. “From tomorrow.”
“Don’t instigate me to slap you,” I said, angrily.
He brought his cheek closer to me, “all yours.”
“Oh god! This boy is such a big flirt,” I huffed.
“Ok” He turned to serious. “I did this to save you from further stupid
”
I shot him a dead look “That’s none of your business.”
A residual smile lingered on his face, making the dimple in his cheek s
“You are going to take responsibility for that. This disaster is all your
“You didn’t tell anyone else that we kissed, did you?” I asked.
He nodded with a faint smile.
“Idiot! Idiot! Idiot! What did you do that for? I’m sure its spread every
“Isn’t there anything you can do about it,” I added.

He got serious “Yes, there is.”
“Really,” I chirped.
He came too close and whispered in my ear, “we can just make the ru
I pushed him away, “hell with you. I will end it myself.”
I went to the class and sat there thinking hard of a solution. Sam came
“What happened?” ,asked Nishi.
“Nothing. I have to get it fixed myself.”

After college I went home still thinking of a solution and few minutes
.

It was 1st April today, April fool’s day. I had to make a fool of someo
man campaign she would surely be the head of it. I decide to pull on a p
Then in the lunch break, Sid was having lunch with Sam and Manas. I
I nodded, “I have to tell you something really important. Listen carefull
“What?” ,Sid’s eyes gleamed “really, is it true?”
“Yes.” I smiled.
But then he stopped. “I don’t believe you. She didn’t say anything to m
“No. She’s too shy to confess it to you,” I assured.
“It’s a prank again.” He smirked. “I won’t fall for it buddy.”
“Ohfo, I’m serious.” I took a deep breath. “Lets make it safe, go propo
“That’s a cool idea,” he smiled.
“Should I go now?” he asked .
“Propose her after college. I will make an excuse to stop her in the cla
“And please don’t tell her that I told you. She will feel offended that y
“Mm-hmm!” he nodded and smiling went back to sit at his seat.

After college, everyone moved out from the class. I stopped Surbhi to l
“Excuse me surbhi. I will be back in a minute, I forgot to return a not
By now I had already pictured in my head Sid proposing her and gettin
“Nishi,” I stopped her. “I have to show you something hilarious. Come
“Okay, but what is it?”
“I pulled a massive prank on Sid. He’s going to be dead today.” I flas
“Really?” ,Curiosity filled her brown eyes.
I nodded, smiling.
We peeped from our class back gate. Sid was holding a flower looking
“Why you pulling a prank on him again?” whispered Nishi.
“Because he’s an easy target,” I grinned .
Sid turned his head to the door with that half-

assed face. He acted confident but he was always on his edge when confr

I signalled from my hand to move forward. He went straight to Surbhi.

"S-

Surbhi," his voice trembled. She looked up at him. He instantly went on l

She stood up at once and walked to him. She stared him for few secor

"You took the courage to say that." she smiled, "So, I would say yes."

"This is . . . I don't even know." I couldn't believe my ears. I laughec

Nishi pressed her lips together until the urge to laugh subsided and ther

With a defeated face I could only whisper, "ACCIDENTALLY CUPID.'

She looked at my face and chuckled.

Sid stood up. "Thank you my lady." And came rushing out of the class

I was speechless. I flashed a false smile and saw him leave. He was n

in-the-daffodils happy. Certainly not singing-in-the-rain happy. It was a new flavour of happiness he had never known before changing book that's simply … started .

Surbhi was still inside the class looking at the flower and blushing. I w

She smiled. "It was just to cover up. Actually no one asked me before.

"Okay. Good luck buddy," said I and she left for her hostel. Nishi and

Next few days, I saw Nishi and Sid whispering seldom times. They did

"I have to go too," I said and left but forgot my book. Returning, I he

"Sid, remember, Radhika's mission" said Nishi but he didn't listen. She

"Where do you think you are going?," asked Nishi with a brow raised.

"Library to study."

"Liar!" She dropped his collar. "We are supposed to find a boyfriend fo

"But I want to study for sessionals. I want a 100 this time," Sid moan

"This and that are two entirely different issues and you are never going

I laughed. They looked at the door, gloating .

"Stop guys. You don't owe me anything. Just chill and leave that boyfr

"Okay," said Sid and we laughed.

A week later, Nishi and me were talking outside our class when Sam a

"No pressure. I can go with Manas if you have plans," he said with a

"Sorry, Mr.

Awasthi has called me and Manas to his office. So he can't go with you,

Sam flashed a sad expression, "I would have taken Sid but he's busy."

"So it's not a date?" I asked.

"Nope, just friends," he replied.

“And we’ll see how that works out for you,” teased Nishi.

“Shut up,” I scolded her. “thanks for the ticket, I will go with you,” I

His eyes brightened, “would you like to get some pizza or something b

“Pizza’s great,” I nodded.

“That’s uh… that’s good, then. The movie’s at three, so we’ll leave from college at two

I nodded again and Sam waved goodbye.

“Oh, god,” Nishi said. “You’re a glutton, Raks. But it would be a good .

I smiled. “You heard him. It’s not a date. And I can’t think of a date

“You never going to let that attitude go, are you?”

“Probably not. No,” I smiled.

Sam and me left from college and reached the restaurant. The waiter ha

He cleared his throat, “I’m sorry. I think I’ve monopolized the conversa

“It’s fine.” I smiled. “It has been a long time.”

Just then, the door chimed. I turned to see Manas and Nishi walk in. It t

“Cheater,” I muttered under my breath.

“What?” Sam asked, turning to see them sit on a table across the room

“There’s McDonalds up floor, we can go there if you say,” Sam said i it had been taken to a whole new level. He probably guessed from my ex

I looked at Sam with a false apologetic smile. “I’m sorry. I have to go

His eyebrows shoot up, “are you serious?”

I nodded. “But we haven’t seen the movie yet,” he added.

I stood up, “you can still call Sid, right?”

“Please don’t go,” the corners of Sam’s mouth turned down infinitesima

“I’m really sorry. I totally forgot that I have an important work at hom

“Oops, Sorry. I thought it was Nishi” I apologised. “Why are you here?

“I don’t like seeing a movie alone. So, I handed the tickets to Nishi ar

I smiled, “Okay.” We took a bus and reached our homes.

The last event of 3rd year ended but not their stupidity. They remained

** *

Months passed and college ended. We all got placed in different compa

“I’m leaving after July,” I said.

Nishi rested her head on my shoulder. “I’m going to miss you.”

“Me too.”

“You’ll be bereft without me,” said Nishi.
“I know.”
She sat up, eyes glimmering with excitement. “You know, I can look u
“Oh, Nishi…” I wanted to hug the girl or cry. That seriously meant a
“Hmm,” the tips of her mouth turned down. “Why don’t you leave this
“Later for sure, but right now I want to explore a new city. You know
“Well, think about it. If you change your mind, text me and I’ll zip yo
“Sure,” I smiled.

After hours of whipping we left to our houses. Next month in July, I l

CHAPTER-11

End Of The Love Stories

Six months passed in Pune. It was a beautiful city and I was enjoying r

"Whew! As expected from Nishi and the rest, they can even pressurize

Buzz! Buzz!

I jerked straight up in bed, confused and disorientated. It was damn nea chop myself in the morning for this.

I sat up, frowning and took the call "Hello, Nishi. Why are you calling

She didn't utter a word but cried.

"Is everything okay?," I winced at the sound of my voice.

"No," she replied, crying.

"What happened?," I asked, scared.

"Manas's mom is not happy with our relationship. She's looking for a

.

"Don't worry. I'm coming next week. Manas is not marrying anyone ex

"Okay." She stopped crying.

"I'm coming over for new year. I have 10 days. I will sort out everyth

"Okay, I will be waiting" she said. I disconnected the call and went to

A week later on Saturday, I took a flight, reached home and went to n

"I think I know you," a voice came from behind.

I turned back to look, "Jeez. You haven't changed a bit."

Rocking a pair of dark shades. "It's you, Raks." Sam smiled. "You loo

"Drop it, okay?" I started to walk.

"Hey, you pretty girl!" he walked to catch up with me. "Hey, give me

I scoffed, "Stop staring. You'll sprain your eyes."

"No, it's just that they look familiar," he said.

I sighed in exasperation. Why does he have to be such a flirt?

"Anyway, what brings you here. Missed me so much that you had to s

.

"No," I huffed. "I was forced to come here." I tugged my hair to the l

"Yeah, like meeting some silly boyfriend," said he.

"Argh, stop that crap!" I frowned. "People like you really make thinkin

Stopping mid-way, he looked at me and smiled "What do you mean?"

"You are a pervert and a playboy," I sighed.

“I may be a playboy, but not a pervert” he smiled again.
“Whatever, why are you here?” I asked.
“Manas called me.”
“And you?” he asked.
“Nishi.”
We moved inside the cafeteria. I swear Nishi was waiting at the door l
Sam went to the table, “friends, how have you been?”
“Great, dude!” Sid tapped on Sam’s palm.
“Look at you. Life in the south has done you well,” said Manas.
Sam took a seat next to Manas. Me and Nishi returned to the table. “H
“So, how’s everyone?” I asked.
Before anyone could utter Nishi replied, “not good.”
“Ok, so let’s sort this out.” I smiled. “Have you thought of a solution?
“No,” said Nishi.
“Any suggestion boys?” ,I asked.
“Thinking,” said Sid .
“First tell me who is against your marriage. His family or yours?” I as
“Mine. My mom more,” said Manas.
“My family has little objection but I will convince them,” said Nishi.
“Good, so half the problem is done,” I smiled. “It’s only Manas parent
I looked at them four with a smile, “so, who’s going?”
Everyone shot me a gaze and I uttered, “What?”
“It’s you who started this story, so it’s your responsibility to set everyt
My mouth dropped open, “Huh? , You’re joking, right?”
She gave me a piercing gaze. “Don’t pull that gaze on me. I’m not go
“Please, you have to; it’s a matter of life and death for me,” said Nish
Tipping my head back against the chair, I took a deep breath and mov
Nishi whipped her tears and smiled “I knew you would go.”
“But I need someone to accompany me. Who’s coming?” I wiggled my eyebrows.
“I’m,” said Sam. “I know his mom. Maybe I can help.”
“Okay, decided then, me and Sam are going.” I stood up, “let’s go.”

We all reached Manas’s colony. Sam and Manas parked their cars a bit walking when I saw the others following us. I stopped and turned around.
“Because you know…” said Nishi.
“It’s not because we don’t have anything else to do,” said Sid.
“That’s exactly why. Just stay here, you people are going to make me
Leaving them behind, Sam and me walked till Manas’s door. My index

“I have a feeling of foreboding,” I whispered. “It feels like we’re surro
“I know. Don’t worry,” said Sid.
“Shouldn’t we go back?” ,I whispered.
“We’ve come too far to go back now,” whispered Sam in return.
“Hmm.”
Fearing, I pressed the bell. 2 minutes later when the door didn’t open. one home” relieved, I turned back to move. “Let’s go, we will come som “Namaste! Aunty,” greeted Sameer.
Shit, I closed my eyes. Turning to her I greeted, “Namaste!”
“Manas isn’t home right now,” she said.
“We know. We have come to meet you,” said Sam.
“Ok, come inside.”

We went to the drawing room and got seated at the sofa. Manas mom
I gathered courage and said, “we want to talk about Manas and Nishi. ”
She frowned, “What about them?”
I started talking “Aunty, I don’t question your decision. I can’t, I’m toc
“Sorry,” said his mother, flatly. “I can’t accept that girl as my daughter in-law. Never.”
“But why aunty. She a good girl. I assure you won’t have any complai
“She might be good but she doesn’t fits in the family.” She looked det
“Aunty why are you thinking about others. Think of your son’s heart,”
“This Nishi, is too short, isn’t pretty and not of the same caste. On wh
“On the basis of Manas’s love for Nishi,” I said.
“He’s a stupid boy. First he was mad for some idiotic girl. Now this n
“I can understand aunty but I can just plead you to think once more.”
“What do you think about Manas?” she asked.
I put the glass back on the tray. “He’s a good friend.”
“As a person?”
“He’s kind, good looking and intelligent. A wonderful person in total,” .
She smiled. “I like you from the very first day I saw you. Well-mannered and pretty. I can’t agree on Nishi, but if you like ‘will you mai
My jaw dropped open. “Aunty you are joking, right?” I asked.
“No. I’m serious.”
I was shocked. I never thought she would say anything like that. It was
“And as you think my son is a wonderful person, I don’t think you wi
I was speechless. I wished the ground would open and swallow me imr

“Why? I will ask her parents if that’s the problem,” she said.

Slinging his arm around my shoulder he said, “we love each other.”

Manas mom’s smile disappeared.

“This is . . . true.” I laughed, somewhat dumbstruck. I let go of my br

“Okay, but I won’t agree for Nishi,” she said.

“Fine. I think we should leave now,” said Sam.

I nodded and we got out of his house. We walked slowly towards the

“No.”

“Don’t you think you should thank me,” said Sam.

“For what, that comment. That was lame. ”

“But atleast it worked.” He smiled.

“Ya, you can say that.”

“As a token of thanks, you should go out with me on a date,” said Sa

“Don’t start that, I’m not in the mood.”

“But what can we do, you tried your best,” said Sam.

“Mm-hmm! But I’m still not going out with you.”

“Then hang out with me.”

“How’s that any different from going out with you? Anyway, I’m not g

“How is me asking you to hang out with me tonight any different than

Ah, he had a good point. “No way” I frowned. “Let’s go, others must

We reached Sam’s car. I tried to avoid Nishi’s gaze.

“What did she say?” Nishi asked.

“She is stubborn. I don’t think she would ever agree,” said Sam.

“Sorry. I tried my best,” I said.

Nishi started crying. “Don’t cry,” Manas wiped off her tears from her f

An idea strike me. “Hey guys, how about getting Manas mom kidnappe

“Cool!” Sid eyes widened. “And then we won’t free her until she agree

“I don’t think it would work,” said Manas “she won’t give up so easily

I looked at Sid in surprise, he hasn’t changed. His stupidity was still pr

“That wasn’t my idea.” I took a small pause “how about Nishi saving his

”

“Good idea,” Nishi smiled.

“Yeah!” said Sid.

“Hmm, this might work,” sighed Manas.

I looked at Sid and Sam with a smirk, “so kidnappers, when should we

“What! Me, kidnapper. No-

no,” Sid fidgeted. “Don’t you remember his video, she’s too dangerous.” H

“I’m also not,” countered Sam.

I looked at Nishi indicating her to use her tactics and convince them.

Nishi started her tactic of emotional blackmail, her best attribute. “You
Forget it, let him get married to someone else. I will live with the pain f
He made a sad face, “no pressure guys. If you don’t want to help, we
They got trapped in the drama. Their faces showed signs of guilt. Few
“Me too,” Sam nodded.
I smiled. It was too easy to convince them, I wished Manas mom got
goons that go for robbery. One of them got out of the car. Grabbed her a
way. Her jaw dropped open, me and Manas just saw the scene in stunned

Manas mom had jerked her arm from his hand, took out her sandal a
“what happened mom?,” asked Manas.
“That idiot was trying to kidnap me,” replied she.
“You wait here. I will get him.”
Manas ran after the kidnapper. Inside the car, I was guessing who was
Manas returned to his mom. “Mom they ran away,” he gasped.
“Don’t worry, I taught him a lesson. He won’t think of doing it again,’
“I forgot my wallet at home,” replied Manas.
“Ok mom, I’m going now and please return home it’s not safe,” he ad
“Ok,” said she and returned .

Manas walked back to his car and quickly called Sam to ask where he
“Sorry Sid,” said Nishi.
“I told you, she’s too dangerous,” moaned Sid.
“I’m really sorry,” she apologised.
I took a deep breath. “This planned failed, what’s next?”
“I can’t think right now,” said Sid, moaning.
“I’m blank,” said Manas.
I asked Nishi if she had something in her mind but she shook her hea
“What? That’s definitely not a good thing to do,” I said.
“I’m ready,” said Nishi.
“And you?” asked Sam to Manas.
“Okay.”
“Guys, listen. That’s not the right thing to do. Think of your parents re
“Why should we, when they can’t think of us” said Manas.
“And the bases of her rejection are her outer imperfections. No matter

Unwillingly, I had to agree on supporting that idea. It was decided that
Sam sighed as witnesses and the marriage was done. The photo of the ne
A month later when the marriage certificate arrived, Manas told everyth
Few days later from Manas’s beating, I got a call from Nishi inviting

I took three days leave for her big day. Arrived home and got picked f
“I need your wedding card soon too,” I said.
“It’s gonna take 2 years. Our parents are not that opposed. Once I start

After we reached the venue, I ran to the bride’s room. Nishi was dress
.
“Hey, you looking too pretty. Manas would love to run again,” I teased
She hugged me and smiled. “The bride’s best friend is looking pretty e
Just then, my phone beeped in my hand. I opened it. It was a message
burning brushfire.
I again got a text from him, “look at the door.” I looked straight to th
“Hey! You looking too pretty.”
I ignored his comment. “What’s this text, are you mad. Don’t send this
“I LOVE YOU” he wrote that in the text. Maybe he was serious. No.

Me and Surbhi took Nishi to the stage where the jaimala was done. Af
my best friend. An hour later I got a call from Sid to come out. It was l
I ignored him and kept walking. He quickly rushed to me and grabbed
I turned to walk away but he grabbed my hand again and pulled me ba
“What?” I said, angrily.
“Why you hate me so much?”
“That’s because…”I paused. His eyes stared me, un-blinked.
In an angry tone I started, “I’ll tell you just one last time, so listen ca
“Radhika, you know I’d never hurt you,” he moaned. His voice cracked

***

I went to the balcony. Resting one arm on the grill, Varsha came to m
I stared at the sky as I gulp down the steamy coffee down my throat.

I paused for a minute and then took a deep breath. “You know the kin
— atleast how we perceive it now— is non-
existent. If you think about it, it’s funny. There are no boys perfect as pr

“Then there is this one feeling, stronger than love and more powerful th
her. “That guilt, when you remember that you don’t have enough courage

After he left, I felt the same guilt because it wasn’t his fault actually. I

Sometimes in life you make a decision and you find yourself questioni

“But Sameer was so perfect. Why you never gave him a chance?” aske

I smiled. “He wasn’t a bad boy but not good enough for me.” I winke in movies and novels with handsome bad boy characters. However, the rea

“So what kind of boys should one choose?” she asked.

“The men who stay with you forever are the ones who have dependabl So always aim for a simple good guy not the bad one and if you can ha

“That love story was really fun. I’m happy that I know it now.” Varsha smiled.

I smiled back at her. “I tell you a secret,” I whispered and her eyes gl e it or not, falling in love is partly a decision. Love isn’t magical on its o exist, the magic we’re familiar with, happens when you accept the answer to life is not knowing the answer.”

More to come

Read how Radhika’s life takes a turn when she sh