



SINGH
AMANDEEP

Unbreakable Bond

a novel based on real events

Introduction: Our Journey to Forever

Dear Arsh,

This isn't just any book. It's a story—a story that captures the past year of our lives, a year that brought two strangers together and turned them into the closest of friends. This is my gift to you, written from my heart to yours, as you step into your 20th year today. And yes, it's penned by me, your Greeky, your Big Head, your Buddha—Amandeep Saini Singh, 23 years old and forever grateful to have met you.

I still remember the first time I laid eyes on you, the moment I first saw your radiant smile, and felt the warmth of your presence. I had no idea that the person standing before me, Arshdeep Kaur—whom I lovingly call **Arsh** (a name only I wish to use)—would become such an irreplaceable part of my life. You're known to many as **Ms. Unstoppable Radio**, the one who never stops talking, sharing stories, or lighting up the room with your energy. To me, you are my **Best Friend for Life (BBFE)** and **Meri Buddhi**—my wise one who brings balance and understanding to my often chaotic mind.

This book is a reflection of our journey together, a chronicle of the moments, the experiences, and the emotions we've shared over the past year. It's not just a collection of stories; it's an exploration of how two people, who barely knew each other, found a connection so deep, so genuine, that it feels like we were always meant to be in each other's lives.

I've broken down our story into various phases or stages—each one representing a significant part of my memories, life experiences, and thoughts about you. Each chapter is a piece of the puzzle, an integral part of how I slowly got closer to you, how we moved from being acquaintances to becoming the **BEST FRIENDS FOREVER**. This book isn't just about our past; it's a celebration of our present and a hopeful look at our future together.

So, as you turn the pages of this book, I hope you feel every emotion I've poured into these words. I hope you see what you mean to me, how grateful I am to have you in my life, and how excited I am to continue this journey with you. This book is a testament to the true meaning of being a **BEST FRIEND FOR LIFE**, and I am honored to share it with you.

With all my love,
Your Greeky, Big Head, and Buddha, Amandeep Saini Singh

Chapter 1: The First Meeting - A Vancouver Encounter

It's funny how life sometimes introduces you to the most important people in the most unexpected ways. Before April 2023, I didn't even know that Arshdeep Kaur—whom I now affectionately call Arsh—existed. I didn't know that she was my cousin, let alone someone who would soon become my **Best Friend for Life (BBFE)**. But here we are, a year later, and it's incredible to reflect on how far we've come from that very first meeting to sharing every single detail of our days with each other. But before diving into the depths of our friendship, let me take you back to where it all began—when we met for the first time in Vancouver, Canada.

It was a time of weddings and family gatherings, those grand events where everyone from all corners of the globe comes together. In April 2023, my parents decided that we should attend my cousin Gurpreet Pajji's wedding in Vancouver. To be honest, I wasn't thrilled about the idea. School assignments were piling up, and I had a workload from my job that seemed endless. Moreover, attending a cousin's wedding, especially one I barely knew, didn't exactly appeal to my introverted nature. Born and raised in Greece, I've always been the shy, reserved type—more comfortable with solitude than large gatherings. My parents, however, were adamant. They were raised in India, accustomed to massive family networks spread across the world, and attending such events was natural for them.

Unexpectedly, my teachers and even my colleagues at work encouraged me to take the trip. They saw how hard I had been working, balancing everything with such dedication, and they insisted I take some time for myself to unwind. It was their words and support that finally swayed me, and so, we collectively decided to embark on this journey to Canada.

The day we landed in Vancouver was hot and sunny, the kind of day that makes you sweat even as you stand still. I still remember the heat clinging to our skin as we waited at the airport. My cousin, Manpreet Pajji, Gurpreet's brother, was there to pick us up in his pickup truck. We loaded our luggage into the back and set off towards his house. As we drove, I had no idea that in just a few minutes, I was about to meet someone who would change my life forever.

When we finally reached the house, I stepped out of the truck, still a bit disoriented from the long flight and the sudden warmth. And that's when I saw her—a girl who seemed to glow in the sunlight, standing there with a simplicity that was magnetic. She was lovable and charming, her hair flowing like silk, catching the light in a way that made it seem almost ethereal. She wore glossy, whitish glasses that shimmered, catching my eyes and holding them in a kind of trance. I stood there, completely speechless, as a flood of thoughts ran through my mind: *Who is this girl? How could someone be so effortlessly beautiful, so angelic, so pulchritudinous that it leaves me unable to look away?*²

I was lost in that moment, my mind racing with thoughts, wondering who she could be. But then, suddenly, a voice called out from behind, breaking the spell. I snapped back to reality, my gaze shifting away from her reluctantly. I got out of the car and began to greet all the relatives around me, the usual "hello" and "how are you" that comes with these family gatherings.

And then, something unexpected happened. As I was talking to the others, I noticed her moving closer, as if she wanted to speak to me. I could feel my heart beating faster, my palms getting a little sweaty. She walked up to me and, without hesitation, gave me a side hug—a casual gesture, but for me, it was anything but ordinary. It was the **BEST SIDE HUG FEELING** I'd ever experienced. I had never received a side hug from someone I didn't know, especially not from a girl my age. But there was something different, something incredibly unique about this hug. It wasn't just a gesture of greeting; it felt like a silent promise of something more.

From that specific moment, something changed inside me. I felt this intense attachment to her, a feeling that I had found someone special. I remember thinking to myself, *This is the girl I've been looking for—a friend I never knew I needed.* It was as if she welcomed me with open arms, literally and figuratively. She had no idea who I was, and yet, she was the first person to greet me with such warmth. That side hug—a simple act—felt like a grand welcome to Canada, a unique and wonderful feeling that I had never experienced before.

As I continued to greet everyone, my heart was pounding, almost as if it was trying to leap out of my chest. My body felt numb with a strange mix of excitement and nervousness. When she came closer, I could see her eyes through those glossy white glasses—those deep, pearly black eyes that seemed to speak a thousand words. And those eyes told me one thing loud and clear: **SHE'S EXCITED FOR ME.** At that moment, I knew I needed her in my life. It wasn't just a desire; it felt like a necessity.

As the day went on, we greeted each other in the typical Indian style, the warmth and respect evident in every gesture. I couldn't help but feel drawn to her, wanting to know more, to be closer. But as the crowd thickened with more family members, neither of us knew anything about each other yet. It wasn't until later that day, when she heard someone mention that "Greeky (Aman) is here," that she realized who I was. She had heard about me—Greeky, the cousin who was quite popular in Canada for reasons I couldn't fathom—but she never imagined that the Greeky she had heard about would be me.

For her, it must have been a mix of surprise and relief. She realized that this "Greeky guy" was another cousin, someone she was related to. And from what I heard, she was excited to talk to me, to finally put a face to the name. But as for me, I knew nothing. I didn't know who she was, how we were related, or anything else, but she seemed to know almost everything about me.

That day, amidst the celebrations of our cousin Gopi Paji's wedding, was our very first meeting. Despite staying in the same house, we hardly spoke. The house was always crowded, the noise of laughter and conversations filling every corner, making it difficult to find a moment alone. And in the context of an Indian wedding, there's this unspoken tradition—girls stick with girls, and boys with boys. It's not a rule, but when you do talk across those lines, it always seems to draw attention.

Our interactions were limited to brief moments—asking where things were in the house or coordinating small chores. I have always had this tendency to help out, to clean up where I can, and these small opportunities gave me a chance to talk to her, even if it was just in passing. I was grateful for those small steps, those tiny interactions.

They were enough to make me feel a connection, a spark that I hadn't felt in a long time. But I'm sure you're wondering: *How did we actually start talking?* *What made us grow closer?* Well, that's where the real story begins.

Chapter 2: The Exchange - A Day at Niagara Falls

If there's one thing I've learned over the past year, it's that some moments, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, have the power to change everything. Our journey took a significant turn after the wedding, during the week we spent in Toronto, particularly in Woodstock, where my cousin Amarjit lives. Coincidentally, this was also where you and your family were living. After the chaos and festivities of the wedding, it felt like a much-needed breath of fresh air. Compared to the crowded wedding house with guests from all over the USA and abroad, this house felt different—more intimate, more personal. Here, it was just your family and Amarjit Paji's family, and suddenly, there was more room for meaningful moments.

Even with the opportunity to be around you more often, there was still a distance—a hesitation between us. We stayed in the same house, played games, went to the park, but we never really spent quality time together. You were often busy with work, and I was still grappling with my own shyness. It felt like we were two strangers, orbiting around the same space, getting to know each other in slow, tentative steps. There was still that awkwardness, that nervous energy that seemed to hang in the air. I could feel it, though you, on the other hand, seemed completely at ease—always so chill, comfortable, and willing to talk.

But then, there was that day—the day we went to Niagara Falls. I remember it like it was yesterday, etched into my memory with the clarity of a sunlit photograph. It was a hot day, around 27 degrees, the kind of sunny, bright day that is perfect for a long ride. We drove for about two hours to reach our destination, and despite having visited Niagara Falls three times before, it felt like a new adventure. My parents, however, had never seen it, so their excitement added a different kind of joy to the trip.

When we finally parked, we had to walk about 15 minutes to reach the Falls. I still remember how the temperature seemed to drop as we got closer, the cool mist from the water cutting through the heat. We took countless pictures that day, trying to capture the grandeur of the falls, the joy on everyone's faces, and the feeling of being in that moment. And then came **the picture**—the one that would become one of my favorite memories of all time. I stood there, flexing my muscles in a playful pose, and you slipped into the frame from behind, flashing a peace sign. It was spontaneous, unplanned, and yet, it turned out to be perfect. I still want to frame it—it's that good. It wasn't just a picture; it was the first picture of us together, a memory captured forever.

After spending time marveling at the falls and soaking in the beauty around us, the group decided to split up. The older folks, including my parents, headed to the Fallsview Casino, while all the cousins—you, me, my sister, Bhawan (your brother), and Amarjit Paji—decided to go go-karting.

It was fun, carefree, and the kind of experience that lets you forget everything else for a while. After racing each other around the track, laughing and cheering, we decided it was time to go back to the casino to pick up our parents.

We walked together back to the Fallsview Casino, the sun beginning to set and casting a warm glow over everything. When we reached the casino, there was a bit of a situation. Only Amarjit Paji and I were above 18 and eligible to enter. He had his ID and went inside to call the parents, but when I reached for my wallet, I realized with a sudden sinking feeling that I had left my ID at home. I wasn't allowed to go in, which meant I had to wait outside with you, my sister, and Bhawan.

And here is where destiny played its hand. What seemed like a minor inconvenience at the time turned out to be **the MOST FORTUNATE OPPORTUNITY OF MY LIFE**. You see, sometimes the universe aligns perfectly, creating the conditions for something magical to happen. Standing there, just outside the casino, waiting for the others, we had our moment.

As we waited, you and my sister started talking about the pictures we had taken earlier at Niagara Falls. I overheard your conversation from a little distance and felt a sudden rush of courage—a need to connect, to break the ice that had kept us somewhat distant. Nervously, I asked, "Could you send me our pictures?" I said it casually, but inside, my heart was racing. Not because I didn't trust you or had any anxiety—no, it was because I've always been shy about asking for something, especially from someone like you.

For a moment, there was a pause, a heartbeat where I thought maybe I'd overstepped. But then you looked at me, smiled, and asked, "What's your number?" Simple words, but for me, they were everything. I hadn't even thought that far ahead. I quickly replied, "I don't have internet. Could you turn on your hotspot?" With a chuckle, you shared your hotspot code, and I was connected. I sent you my number, and without hesitation, you shared yours back. And just like that, something as mundane as exchanging numbers felt monumental.

Looking back, it amazes me how that small moment became the starting point of our deeper connection. I never imagined that day that this simple exchange would lead to so much more. But it was written in the stars, wasn't it? That we would end up sharing numbers on a day when your phone, for once, was fully charged, and you had all the pictures to share. I like to think it was fate—no, I **know** it was fate. That phone number, **+1 519 587 9415**, would go on to become one of the most important numbers in my life.

I remember staring at my phone later, realizing that this was the beginning of something special. I was ecstatic when you sent the pictures right away on WhatsApp. At that time, your profile picture wasn't even of yourself; it was of Amritsar's Golden Temple—a beautiful image, no doubt. And now, who would have guessed that the picture you later put up was clicked by me? A secret only the two of us share.

From that day on, I knew I wanted more. I wanted to be more than just your cousin; I wanted to be your closest friend, the person you'd always turn to. I wanted to make you laugh, be there for you, share every little moment of life with you. I wanted to take that spot in your life, be the one you could call your **BEST FRIEND FOREVER**.

No matter what you did, no matter where you were, I promised myself that I would always be there for you. Because you, Arsh, are my life, my lifeline, my soulmate, my **adventurous Buddhi**—the one who makes my life better in every way.

That day at the casino, when you asked for my number, was such a surreal moment. I couldn't believe that someone like you—so beautiful, so full of life and joy—was asking me for my number. I felt like the luckiest guy on earth. My heart was overflowing with happiness, excitement, and a strange sense of love that I hadn't felt before. I tried to keep my cool, not to show how utterly thrilled I was to be starting this new chapter with you.

Deep down, I knew I had to get to know you better. I needed to understand you, to talk to you, to share everything with you. I wanted us to share our thoughts, our expressions, our love, and most importantly, our bond. And who knew that exchanging phone numbers would lead us to this beautiful journey—talking daily, sharing everything from mundane updates to our deepest thoughts, even those playful, intimate moments that only the closest of friends share.

But you might wonder—exchanging numbers is one thing, but how did we get even closer?

The day I left your house, we didn't even hug or have a proper farewell. But I knew I wanted to talk to you again. I wanted to keep that connection alive. So, while waiting at the airport for my flight back home, I decided to send you a random message about a Cologne bottle with my name engraved on it—something I'd "forgotten" at your place. It wasn't really forgotten; it was a deliberate choice. I wanted you to remember me, to have a piece of me with you, even if it was just a small, engraved bottle.

To this day, it amazes me that you still have that perfume. Knowing it's close to your heart fills me with so much love and gratitude. I knew from the very beginning that I wanted you in my life forever, and maybe, in your own way, you knew it too.

Before I boarded the plane, I sent you another message: "I miss you already. I'll let you know when I get home." And just like that, the seeds of our incredible relationship were sown. This was just the beginning—a glimpse into what would become a bond that went beyond friendship. A bond that would teach us both the true meaning of being **Best Friends for Life**. And so, you might ask—how did our relationship deepen from there? What happened next?

That, my dear Arsh, is a long story that I will tell you through the various phases of my life and how my desire to be with you grew with each passing day. From the start, I knew I wanted you to be my **BEST FRIEND**, and it was only a matter of time and a few serendipitous moments that led us here.

Chapter 3: First Phase - The Beginning of Understanding Each Other

They say the foundation of every great relationship is understanding, and ours was no different. After leaving Canada in May 2023, I felt a deep pull to know you better, Arsh. I had just returned to my life in Netherlands, but something inside me had shifted. I found myself constantly thinking about you, wondering what you were doing, and hoping for another chance to talk. And so began the first phase of our journey—**The Beginning of Understanding Each Other**.

From May to mid-June 2023, our connection began to unfold through countless WhatsApp messages that became the threads binding our friendship together. Every day, I woke up with an eagerness to talk to you, to delve deeper into who you are, what you love, and what makes you tick. I wanted to know everything—your likes, your hobbies, your daily routines, who's in your family, and your experiences in Canada. Every message exchanged felt like a small step toward a larger world that was slowly opening up between us.

I remember vividly those early conversations, where I would ask you a question, and then anxiously wait for your reply. You always had this way of answering that was so genuine, so real. We'd start talking about something simple, like your favorite movies or the music you loved listening to while driving, and then, as if by magic, we'd find ourselves diving into deeper topics—your thoughts on life, the challenges you faced, and your dreams for the future. Every conversation was a new discovery, a new layer of you that I was peeling back, and I cherished every moment of it.

I always looked forward to our next conversation, and each day, I found myself hoping for longer discussions, more profound exchanges. There were days when our conversations would abruptly end due to work or daily responsibilities, but the very next day, there was that familiar spark, that need to continue right where we left off. It was like a story we were both writing, one message at a time.

During these early days, there were a few things about you that truly captivated me and made me want to keep talking, to keep understanding you more deeply. The first thing that struck me was your maturity. At just 18 years old, you spoke with such depth and sincerity, a wisdom beyond your years. I had never met anyone so young who could discuss life's complexities with such clarity and openness. You were unafraid to share your thoughts, to express yourself honestly, and that sincerity drew me in. It was refreshing, unlike anything I had experienced before.

The second thing that stood out was your genuine care for me. From the very beginning, you showed a level of concern and empathy that was rare and precious. You always asked, "How are you?" Not just as a formality, but with genuine interest. You wanted to know how I was feeling, what I was thinking, and how I was handling the situations I found myself in. To me, this was new and incredibly soothing. It felt like I had found someone who truly cared, someone who wasn't just listening but actually hearing me. That kind of care is hard to come by, and it made me want to share more, to open up more, to be more vulnerable.

And then there was your responsiveness—your incredible, lightning-fast replies that never ceased to amaze me. You would always say to me, "Mein te vehli a" (I am almost free), but I knew that even the freest people don't respond to every message so quickly, and certainly not with such thought and engagement. Your responses were quicker than a flick of a switch, faster than lightning. I still remember how, even when it was late at night for me and just morning in Canada, you'd respond with such speed and enthusiasm. It was almost as if you were waiting for my messages, just as eagerly as I was waiting for yours.

Your quick replies, your genuine care, and your eagerness to know about me and my experiences—it all felt like some kind of magic. A spell you had unknowingly cast over me. And even though everything between us was virtual at that time—no pictures, no voice notes, nothing but words on a screen—I felt this deep, undeniable connection, like you were mine in some inexplicable way.

I realized that even without seeing you, without hearing your voice, I was falling deeper into this beautiful journey with you. Our messages became our lifeline, each one a small piece of a bigger picture that we were painting together. Every word shared, every thought exchanged was like a brick being laid down, building the foundation of what was to come—a strong, unshakeable bond that I couldn't have predicted but felt incredibly grateful for.

Looking back, this phase was the beginning of something profound. It was during these conversations that I truly started to understand who you were, Arsh. I began to see the person behind the words—the girl who was wise beyond her years, who cared deeply, who listened intently, and who was always there, even from miles away.

And so, our story continued to unfold, one message at a time. Each day, I found myself more drawn to you, more connected to you, and more certain that I wanted you in my life. I didn't know where this was all heading, but I knew one thing for sure—I wanted to keep understanding you, to keep building this connection, to keep sharing this beautiful bond that was only just beginning.

Chapter 4: Second Phase - The Fun and Laughter

They say that laughter is the shortest distance between two people, and I can truly attest to that because, in our case, laughter became the bridge that brought us closer than ever before. If the first phase was about understanding and getting to know each other, this second phase was where the magic truly began. This is what I call the **Second Phase: The Fun and Laughter**.

From mid-June to July 2023, this phase was like a whirlwind of emotions, filled with jokes, playful banter, and moments of pure joy. I can still feel the rush of excitement I had every time my phone buzzed with your message notification. This was the phase where I began to show you my true colors, my humor, and my quirks. The timing was always perfect—you'd come online late at night in the Netherlands, and we'd dive into the most entertaining and light-hearted conversations.

This phase was unlike anything I had experienced before. **Kiya hi time c, kiya hi nazaara c, kiya hi fun c, te keya hi mazaa di, alag hi level c** (What a time it was, what moments we had, what fun we shared, what joy we felt—it was a whole different level). Where do I even begin to describe the beauty of those days?

I was flirting with you like we were in some teenage rom-com, making fun of your looks, your dressing sense, your way of talking—everything became a topic for our playful banter. I'd throw in random jokes, pull pranks, tease you mercilessly like a girlfriend—although, of course, it was all in good fun. And the best part? You played along. You matched my energy every step of the way, and that made it even more exciting.

As I write this, I'm getting goosebumps just thinking about it. **Uff, keya ki kavha** (What should I even say?)—everything was so pure and genuine, coming straight from the heart. For the first time in my life, I felt like I'd found my soulmate. I'd found my best friend, my **Buddhi** (my old lady), the person I had been looking for all along. I had been searching for you in the wrong places, and suddenly, there you were.

Everything flowed so naturally between us. We were talking every single day, only texting on WhatsApp. It was like our own little world where no one else existed. We even promised each other that we would talk every day, and to be honest, we have kept that promise till now. Not a single day has gone by without us sharing our thoughts, our experiences, and our random jokes. It's like we've been on an unbroken streak since then, and I cherish every moment of it.

But as perfect as this phase was, it wasn't without its shadows. There was a moment—**a dark turn**—that changed everything for me. I felt a shift, a heaviness that began to creep into my heart. For the first time in what felt like forever, I started feeling lonely again. I became withdrawn, depressed, and even lost my appetite for days. I felt like I was losing myself, my personality, the person I was around you. I was scared. What was happening to me? What was this feeling? I had no answers.

And then, the disaster struck—the downfall, the most painful period of my life, something I had never experienced before. It was a series of events that led to this. As this beautiful, laughter-filled phase was drawing to a close, I thought it would be a great idea to pull the **biggest prank of my life**. I wanted to push the boundaries a bit, to see how you would react. For a couple of days, I decided to play the role of a lover—sending you love messages, telling you how much I missed you, how I wanted to be with you, hug you, kiss you all over. I went all in, setting the stage for the prank of a lifetime.

In my heart, I never saw myself as your lover or boyfriend—it was all just for fun, to test the waters and see what you'd say. But something happened that I didn't expect. You took it seriously. You weren't as open on certain matters, especially in our chats, but with some courage, you finally addressed it. You said you wanted to discuss something serious with me.

I remember your words like it was yesterday: "**Are you in love with me? Tell me, we are cousins, and the way you behave, it seems like you are loving me as a boyfriend.**" My heart skipped a beat. For a moment, I was frozen. But I kept my cool and replied seriously, "Yes, I am so much in love with you. I want to be with you and want to hug you, love you, and kiss you all the time." I kept up the act, wanting to see how far you'd take it.

My thoughts at the time: I was just pulling a prank, hoping to see your reaction, to know what you truly felt about it. I wanted to reassure you that I had never thought of you that way, not for a moment. But things didn't go as planned.

Your thoughts, Arsh: I realized later that you took it very seriously. You genuinely believed I was in love with you, and it brought back memories of something from your childhood—something that had deeply affected you. When I finally revealed that I was joking, you seemed relieved on the surface, even laughing it off. But deep down, I think there was a lingering thought that maybe I was indeed hitting on you, despite being cousins. And that thought stayed with you.

What followed was nothing short of devastating. A nightmare that lasted for days. I could feel the distance between us widening, the comfort we had built slowly slipping away. For a few days, you went silent—no replies, no messages, nothing. I tried everything—texting you, explaining that it was just a prank, that I didn't mean it that way. But I lacked the courage to call and speak about it directly. I was paralyzed with fear, with regret.

Having you not respond was like being thrown into a dark, empty void. I spiraled into a really dark place. I stopped eating, lost interest in everything, and even started checking my phone obsessively, hoping you'd come online. I was desperate, but you were nowhere to be found. Days went by, and it felt like an eternity.

Then, after what felt like ages, you finally came back. You told me, "**I had the roughest time in my life. I cried a lot about what happened. I don't want to tell you right now. I'm not ready, but I will tell you sometime when we are together.**" I was relieved to hear from you, but the pain in your words was evident. I felt it, and it cut me deeper than I ever imagined.

I knew I had hurt you, even if unintentionally. I had made you cry, and for that, I felt like the worst person on earth. You told me you'd share more when we'd meet in person—at Amarjit's wedding in July 2024.

In that moment, I realized how much I had messed up. I never wanted to hurt you, Arsh, never wanted to see you cry. My intentions were never to make you feel this way. I just wanted to have fun, to keep our connection light and filled with laughter, but I had unknowingly opened up an old wound.

The days that followed were filled with regret, with thoughts of what I could have done differently. I knew one thing for sure—I would never pull such a prank again. I learned that day how fragile trust can be, and how careful we must be with the hearts of those we care about.

Looking back now, I see this phase as a turning point—a necessary lesson in understanding the depth of our bond, the care we must take, and the love we must nurture. Because, at the end of the day, I never want to lose you, Arsh. You're too important to me. This phase was not just about fun and laughter; it was about realizing how much you truly mean to me.

And so, we moved on, carrying the weight of this experience, but with a newfound understanding. Sometimes, even in the most painful moments, there is a silver lining—a chance to grow, to be better, and to build something even stronger.

Chapter 5: Third Phase - Distance and Separation

After the laughter, after the fun, came the phase that I feared the most—**Distance and Separation**. It crept in slowly, like an uninvited guest that refuses to leave, and before I knew it, it had settled in the spaces between us. This was July 2023, and the world that once seemed full of light and joy now felt dim and distant. It felt as though a shadow had been cast over everything we had built together.

From the moment our laughter-filled phase ended, I sensed something had changed in you, Arsh. I tried to convince myself that it was all in my head, that perhaps I was overthinking, but deep down, I knew. I knew my prank had affected you in ways I hadn't anticipated. Every time I asked you seriously, "Did my prank affect you?" you'd always respond with a firm "**NO.**" But even that "**NO**" felt off. It wasn't the same "**NO**" I used to hear before. It felt like a **YES** disguised as a "**NO**," and I couldn't shake that feeling.

I noticed the small things—the little details that most people might overlook. We used to fill our conversations with emojis that brought our texts to life, added color to our words. But now, there was a noticeable absence. The warmth that emojis brought seemed to have faded, replaced by a colder, more formal tone. I convinced myself that maybe you were just busy, maybe it was all in my imagination, but as days went by, the doubt only grew stronger.

I started having these weird, self-destructive thoughts. I began to believe that maybe you didn't like me anymore, that maybe my prank had shattered something precious between us. I felt like I had made you cry, and I was tormented by the thought. How could I, someone who loved you so much, make someone so beautiful, so lovely, so genuine, shed a single tear?

My mind became a battlefield. I should have been the opposite—I always wanted to be the person who would protect you, comfort you, be there for you in every way possible. I imagined myself as everything for you: like a mother who would nurture and care for her child, a father who would stand guard and protect from any evil, a brother who would fight anyone who dared to hurt you, a sister who would talk to you about everything under the sun, and a husband who would always remain loyal and true. But at that moment, I felt like I had failed in every role.

I felt like a mother who had abandoned her child, like a father who didn't care, a brother who turned his back, a sister who was never there, and a husband who had broken the trust. I felt unworthy. I felt lost.

Words can't capture the emptiness I felt. It was like a vast, dark void where nothing existed—no light, no joy, no hope. Just emptiness. I felt like I should just end it all, hang myself up and give up on life. That's how deep the despair went. My world, which had been so vibrant and full, now felt colorless and hollow.

After some persuasion and endless nights of turmoil, you finally opened up about the prank. You told me, "I did expect that you might have feelings of love for me." And I tried, again and again, to explain that I never saw you that way. But the damage had already been done. I could feel the gap widening between us, the distance growing, and I sank deeper into my own misery.

My self-worth plummeted. I felt more lonely than ever, completely devoid of confidence, drained of energy. I stopped eating and became anorexic, insomnia set in, and I felt like a ghost haunting the shell of my former self. Even my writing style changed. I became overly formal, avoiding any mistake, avoiding anything that could be misinterpreted. I stopped pulling pranks, stopped being my funny, lively self. I forgot how to use emojis, how to express myself freely. I became **insecure to be with you**.

But underneath all the insecurity, the doubt, and the pain, my love for you was still there. My ambitions were still there. My excitement, though buried under layers of fear and regret, was still there. I wanted so badly to make things right, to go back to how things were before the prank. But as much as I tried, I couldn't let go of the thought that I had hurt you deeply.

You told me a thousand times that it wasn't about me—that it was something in your personal life that was affecting you. But I didn't believe it. I couldn't. I was convinced that I was the reason for your tears. The prank, my misguided attempt at fun, had backfired so badly. I believed with every fiber of my being that I had made you cry, my soulmate, the person I loved with all my heart. I had made you sad, made you depressed. I felt like I had no right to be happy, no right to talk to you, no right to be with you, no right to even live.

But life has a way of surprising you when you least expect it. Just when I thought I'd lost you, just when I thought I'd lost myself, you began to heal me. Slowly, gently, like the sun rising after a long, cold night. You didn't even know you were doing it, but you were. With every message, with every small gesture of care, you were stitching back the pieces of my broken heart.

How and when did the healing begin? It's hard to pinpoint an exact moment. Maybe it was a combination of moments, small but significant. Maybe it was your patience, your kindness, your willingness to still be there despite everything. Maybe it was the way you tried to reassure me, again and again, that I hadn't done anything wrong, that I hadn't hurt you in the way I thought I did.

Maybe it was the way you continued to be my friend, even when I was drowning in my own insecurities. Slowly, I began to see the light again. Slowly, I began to forgive myself. This phase taught me that relationships aren't always about the good times, the laughter, or the fun.

Sometimes, they're about the distance, the separation, and the pain. Sometimes, they're about understanding that even in the darkest moments, there's a chance to grow, to heal, and to build something even stronger.

And as I look back on this phase now, I realize that it was necessary. It was painful, yes, but it was also a lesson—a lesson in love, in patience, in understanding, and in the resilience of the human heart.

Because even after all that, I still wanted to be with you, Arsh. I still wanted to be your friend, your confidant, your Greeky. I still wanted to be the one who could make you laugh, who could be there for you, who could cherish every moment we shared.

And so, as we moved past this phase, I held on to the hope that maybe, just maybe, we could find our way back to each other. Maybe we could laugh again, be ourselves again, and continue building this bond that meant more to me than anything else in the world.

Chapter 6: Fourth Phase - The Magic of Voice and Picture

After the turmoil of distance and separation, I found myself standing on the edge of an emotional precipice. My heart still ached from the scars of misunderstanding and insecurity, but I knew I couldn't stay in that dark place forever. It was time to heal. And so, began the **Fourth Phase: The Magic of Voice and Picture**—a phase that, unbeknownst to you, Arsh, would slowly bring me back to life.

Healing is not a linear journey; it doesn't happen all at once. It took me about nine months to truly feel like myself again. Nine long months of battling with my own thoughts, confronting my insecurities, and learning to trust again. But if I had to pinpoint the exact moment when the healing began, it would have to be the first time I heard your voice—your real, unfiltered, and lovely voice. It was like a trigger, a spark that ignited something deep within me, something I didn't even know was waiting to be awakened.

You may not know this yet—maybe not until you read this very chapter—but hearing your voice for the first time was like a soothing balm on my wounded soul. It wasn't just a voice; it was a melody, a tune that resonated with every corner of my being. Your voice felt happy, excited, relaxed, and most importantly, it felt like love. For the first time in a long time, I felt that love radiating from your voice, and it reached me in a way that words on a screen never could.

I remember that moment vividly. We were talking about Gurdwara and random things, just the usual banter we had. And then, out of nowhere, I decided to record myself singing “Maardaaala, aye rabba mardaaala, oh Allah.” A silly little snippet, but it was enough to set things in motion. That’s when you sent me a video for the first time—a two-second clip of you flashing a peace sign.

Simple, yet it was everything. I must have watched it a hundred times, if not more. Each time, I felt my heart swell with joy. It hit me: I was making you happy; I was making you laugh. And in that realization, I found a bit of myself again.

But it didn’t stop there. The next trigger, and perhaps the most significant, was when you sent a voice note that said, “**Okay, theek a mein kedha kuch keya.**” I can still hear it in my mind as if you just sent it yesterday. That voice note became my new favorite melody. I felt my anxiety and insecurities begin to melt away with each listen. I remember thinking to myself, “Yes, I am feeling better now. Maybe things are finally turning around.” It was a moment of clarity, a turning point where I began to feel like myself again.

Your words, too, played a vital role in this healing process. I remember one day you said something that made my heart pound like never before. “For the past few days, especially after the prank, I feel like you are not yourself.” I read those words repeatedly, each time feeling a mix of fear and relief. Fear because I didn’t want you to see the broken, insecure side of me. Relief because you saw through my facade. You knew me well enough to notice that something was off. You addressed it, and it gave me the courage to confront it.

When you said that, it was like you reached into the darkness where I was hiding and pulled me back into the light. I tried to downplay it, told you a half-lie, “I’m good,” when in reality, I wasn’t. I told you a partial truth—that the prank had affected me deeply because I felt like I had hurt you, made you cry. And for what felt like the millionth time, you reassured me, “**It was not you, Greeky. You shouldn’t think that. It was something I did which made a lot of family not trust me.**”

Those words were like a balm to my soul. I felt a little more like myself again. But deep down, there was still a lingering insecurity. A tiny voice that kept whispering, “Does she really trust me enough to tell me everything? Or is she holding back?” I wanted so badly to believe you completely, to let go of that insecurity, but it wasn’t easy. The mind is a complex thing, and sometimes it refuses to let go.

But then, something magical happened—another trigger that pushed me closer to healing. You shared something incredibly personal with me, something about your past, about your ex. That moment, more than anything, made me realize that you were opening up to me. You were letting me in, showing me a side of you that not everyone gets to see. I felt like I was stepping into a sacred space, one that you were trusting me to hold with care. And just like that, I was about 80% healed.

I began to see the world in color again. I started to feel the excitement that had been buried under layers of pain and regret. But there was still that remaining 20%—the final barrier that kept me from

being fully healed. I was still curious, still wondering, “What actually happened with her during that time? Why then?” I needed to know. I needed to understand completely.

But even without all the answers, I could feel myself coming back to life. Your voice, your pictures, the little glimpses of you that I held onto so tightly—they became my anchors. They grounded me in a way I hadn’t been grounded in a long time. I realized that maybe I didn’t need all the answers right away. Maybe it was enough to know that you were there, that you cared, and that you were letting me into your world, bit by bit.

Looking back now, I see this phase as a turning point—a phase that taught me the power of vulnerability, of letting go, and of trusting in the magic of the small moments. It taught me that healing is not about erasing the pain but about finding beauty in the scars it leaves behind.

And so, with each voice note, each picture, each moment of shared laughter, I felt myself becoming whole again. I started to believe in the magic of us once more. The magic of **Arsh and Greeky**.

Chapter 7: Fifth Phase - The Realization

After what felt like an endless loop of attempts and gentle persuasions, we finally reached a pivotal moment in our journey—a moment I like to call the **Fifth Phase: The Realization**. It was in this phase that you, Arsh, finally opened up about something that had been weighing heavily on your heart, something that had affected you deeply.

I could feel the weight of your hesitation, the reluctance to reveal this part of yourself, and I respected that. I knew it wasn’t easy for you to share, and I was prepared to wait, however long it took. And when that moment finally came, I knew we had crossed another significant milestone in our friendship.

You revealed that it was an issue with money—money that you had given to someone without your parents’ consent, and that money was lost. I remember reading those words, and for a moment, everything around me stopped. My heart was racing, pounding so fiercely that it felt like it would leap out of my chest. I didn’t know what to expect when you said, “I’m going to tell him.” A million scenarios played out in my mind. Was it about your health? Was it something that physically hurt you? Was it worse than I could imagine? My emotions were all over the place, torn between fear and anticipation.

But then, as I continued reading, a wave of relief washed over me. Yes, it was a serious matter—an important one. But it wasn’t as severe as the dark scenarios I had imagined in my mind. And with that realization, a part of my anxiety dissipated. I felt a strange mix of happiness and concern. I was happy because it wasn’t something dire, something that would harm you irreparably. But I was also concerned because this experience had shaken your ability to trust blindly, had made you doubt people’s intentions.

I knew you were mature; I've always known that. But this incident showed me that your maturity isn't just intellectual—it's deeply emotional. You have a kind heart, a heart that wants to help others, even at the cost of your own comfort. I saw in you an emotional depth that made me admire you even more. And with this new understanding, my insecurities dropped significantly—down to about 90%. Yet, there was still a small lingering part of me that felt, "She isn't as open as I am. She isn't sharing everything." And it bothered me. Not because I wanted to know every single detail of your life, but because I wanted you to feel as comfortable with me as I did with you. I wanted you to trust me with all your heart, just as I trusted you with mine.

After that revelation, I felt like we had turned a corner. We went back to our usual rhythm of jokes, light-hearted banter, and casual flirting. I didn't attempt any pranks this time; I wasn't ready to tread that ground just yet. But we started having more voice chats, sharing pictures that could only be viewed once. It was in those moments of shared vulnerability, in the quiet exchange of daily updates, that I felt we were slowly building back what had been slightly cracked before.

We continued our discussions on WhatsApp every day, without fail. We talked about everything—open-ended topics that had no beginning or end. Some of those conversations are still etched in my mind so vividly: discussions about the Gurdwara, reflections on family, musings about the future, playful banter about Arsh's Marriage Bureau, and even deeper topics like our relationship definition and what love meant to each of us. Most of the time, it was me flirting shamelessly, while you laughed it off or threw a witty comeback my way. It was our dynamic, and I loved it.

But despite all these conversations, I couldn't shake off the feeling that there was still a part of you that wasn't fully open. From your side, you were trying. You were making an effort to share more, to open up about things that were close to your heart. But something was still holding you back. It was almost as if there were a few invisible walls you had put up around certain topics, like our relationship definition. Every time I brought it up, I felt a slight hesitation in your response, a subtle pause that made me wonder, "Is she truly ready to talk about this?"

And that's when my insecurities began to gnaw at me again. Why isn't she sharing everything? Why does it feel like there's still a part of her that's not fully mine? It bothered me more than I'd like to admit. I wanted us to be completely open with each other, to have a relationship built on absolute trust, where nothing was off-limits. But I knew it wasn't something I could force. Trust takes time, and I had to be patient.

Time, however, flew by quicker than I expected. Before we knew it, nine months had passed since our last deep conversation. Nine months of sharing, laughing, and occasionally tiptoeing around certain topics. Nine months of building and rebuilding, of understanding and misunderstanding. And then, finally, the moment came—the moment we were going to meet each other again, face to face, in Toronto, Canada.

This meeting would be different. This meeting, I felt, was going to be the turning point—the moment when all those little hesitations and insecurities would finally be laid to rest. The excitement and anticipation were almost unbearable. I had waited so long to see you again, to talk to you without a screen between us, to feel the full spectrum of our connection in person. And I knew that this time, things would be different.

I didn't know how, but I could feel it in my bones. This meeting would change everything. It would either solidify our bond, making it stronger than ever, or it would reveal the cracks that needed healing. But one thing was certain—I was ready. Ready to meet you, ready to be there for you, and most importantly, ready to show you just how much you mean to me.

Chapter 7: Fifth Phase - The Realization was a period of understanding, growth, and deep introspection. It was a time when we both had to confront our own vulnerabilities and learn to trust again. And as I look back now, I realize that this phase was essential. It was the stepping stone that led us to where we are today—on the brink of something even more beautiful.

Chapter 8: Sixth Phase - The Glance of Our Second Meeting in Person

The **Sixth Phase: The Glance of Our Second Meeting in Person** marks a pivotal moment in our journey—a reunion that was bound to be different, more intense, and far more meaningful than our first. It was July 8th, 2024. A whole year had passed since we last met in person, and this time, things were not the same. I knew her now. She knew me in and out, more than anyone else ever had. But there were still those lingering insecurities from my side. The feeling that she wanted me in her life as a friend but wasn't ready to share every corner of her soul with me. It was confusing, and at times, it made me question things. But today, I wanted to leave all those thoughts behind and just focus on the magic of this moment.

Let's go back to that day. It was July 8th, 2024, a day that couldn't have been more perfect. The sun was shining brightly, the flowers were in full bloom, and the birds were chirping in harmony. I remember the night before—I was so excited that sleep was a distant thought. All I could think about was finally meeting my BEST friend again in person. I was thrilled at the idea of talking to her about everything in real life, face to face. It was a secret that only we knew. Nobody in my family had any idea that I had been talking to this beautiful soul every single day without missing a beat. No one knew that she was the one who helped me heal from the dark abyss of depression, who made me rediscover my true self, who boosted my confidence and motivation, and who always understood me in a way nobody else could. Her personality is just magnificent—absolutely unmatched.

It was the morning of July 7th, 2024, and I chose my favorite outfit for the occasion—a white shirt layered with a checked t-shirt, black trousers, and white Air Force 1 Low shoes. After getting ready, we left for Schiphol Airport. I still remember texting her on the way, telling her about the newly built library and how badly I wanted to touch her feet as a gesture of respect and admiration. Throughout the entire

8-hour flight, I couldn't sleep, not even for a moment. There was no coffee, no energy drink, just pure excitement and adrenaline that kept me wide awake. It's crazy how thinking about the right person makes everything around you more beautiful and dreamy. With that thought in mind, the flight felt both eternal and like the blink of an eye.

When we finally landed, Gopi Paji came to pick us up from the airport. I was so eager to see her that I immediately suggested we go straight to Bhoewa Ji's house (Amarjit Paji's house), knowing that she would be there. I didn't say out loud that Arsh was the reason, but deep down, I knew that was all I cared about. I just wanted to see her. Forget dropping off our luggage at Gopi Paji's house; all I wanted was to get to where she was. After about an hour of driving, we reached Bhoewa Ji's house. As soon as I stepped out of the car, my eyes were only searching for one person—my Arsh. I scanned the surroundings, desperate to catch a glimpse of her. I wanted to talk to her, hug her, kiss her so badly. I wanted to feel her close and secure her in my heart, in my "jadhu di jabhi" (magic hug). And as all these thoughts were racing through my mind, I was reminded of my insecurities, which brought me back to reality. But those feelings of wanting to be close to her remained strong.

And then, I saw her from a distance.

How was our second official meetup after our last holiday?

Let me walk you through it from the beginning. As we arrived at Amarjit's house, I got out of the car and greeted a few people. And then, there she was. I saw her from afar, and everything around me faded. My heart started racing uncontrollably, my hands began shaking like a washing machine on full spin, and I felt a wave of nervousness wash over me. My face must have gone pale, like I'd seen a ghost. But there she was, walking confidently toward me, getting closer with each step. And then I noticed something incredible—something that felt like a sign from the universe. We were wearing almost the same outfit! A white shirt, a checked t-shirt, black trousers, and even the same Nike Air Force 1 Low shoes. It was as if we had unknowingly coordinated our outfits. We had never discussed what we'd wear or planned it. It was pure coincidence, or maybe, it was something more. It felt as though it was written in the Guru Granth Sahib that we would meet this way. It felt like a dream—a dream that was somehow real.

As I got closer to her, my heart pounded even harder, my hands trembled more, and my face turned both red and pale at the same time. I was overwhelmed with a flood of emotions—excitement, nervousness, love, and a hint of fear. I wanted to tell her how much I loved her, how much I missed her, how I wanted to kiss her and hug her tightly, to be close to her for as long as I was there. I wanted to promise her that I would never leave her, no matter what life threw at us. But in the back of my mind, the prank that had caused so much confusion between us replayed, and my insecurities started creeping back in. Even though she had told me she wasn't hurt by it, I still felt the weight of it, which made it difficult for me to approach her freely. My shyness took over, and the fact that we hadn't seen each other in a year added to the tension. We had only seen each other through one time view pictures shared over chats. This was different.

As we got closer, I decided to break the ice in a unique way. Instead of rushing to hug her, I took a step back. I bent down to touch her feet—a gesture of respect and a silent apology for any hurt I might have caused with the prank. It was my way of making amends, of trying to calm both of our nerves. After that,

I finally hugged her. But even that hug felt different. It was like two strangers meeting for the first time. It lacked the warmth, the familiarity I had imagined. It didn't feel like a hug between two people who had shared a year of deep conversations and emotional bonds. But for me, that hug was still a relief. Even if it was brief and awkward, it started to chip away at my insecurities.

I need to take a moment to describe how she looked that day. She was shining in the sun, her straight hair gleaming, her outfit perfectly matching mine, her glossy rose lips, and her pearly black eyes lighting up when she saw me. Her white, glassy glasses reflected the sunlight, making her look like an animated character brought to life. It felt like I was looking at an angel, someone sent to tell me that I could achieve anything in life, that I should always follow my heart, and that she would always be there for me, for my moral, mental, and spiritual well-being. She seemed like a magical being, one of a kind, someone irreplaceable.

How Did I Feel About the Hug? What Were My Emotions?

Reflecting on that moment when we hugged, my emotions were all over the place. The hug felt like a culmination of all the excitement, nervousness, and a very tiny bit of insecurity (about 2%). I was nervous, not just because of my feelings for her but also because of all the relatives around us. In an Indian family setting, where everyone is closely knit, it's easy for people to misinterpret the bond between two cousins. I worried that they might think we shared something more than just a cousin relationship. This thought weighed on me, but when the hug happened, all those worries seemed to melt away.

I saw her up close; I could feel her warmth. The scent of her Pantene shampoo tickled my nostrils, and it was like the world around us just disappeared. In that fleeting moment, I wanted to tell her so many things—that I would always be close to her, that I would always support her, that I would be there for her mental well-being, for anything that bothered her, for everything she ever needed from me. I wanted to say that I would always be there for *her*. But I lacked the courage to put all those feelings into words right then. So you might wonder how I eventually overcame my shyness, my insecurity, and found a way to approach her genuinely.

As I mentioned earlier, my family and I were in Canada mainly because I had promised Amarjit Paji eight years ago that I would attend his wedding, no matter what. I keep my promises, and this was no exception. During that week-long wedding, I consciously tried not to be too close to her. From her perspective, it probably looked like I was avoiding her or even ignoring her. But the reality was different—I simply didn't know how to approach her, how to speak to her, what to say, or how to act around her. I am extremely shy in person (and still am). For the first few days, this nervousness got the better of me. If we ever found ourselves close to each other, I'd freeze, becoming utterly speechless.

I had always been open and expressive with her over chat, but in person, things felt different. It was like my emotions were locked up inside, and every time I tried to talk to her, it seemed like she was too far above me—almost unattainable. I would often watch her from a distance, silently encouraging myself to go and talk to her. "Go for it, Greeky," I'd think. "Just go and talk to her." But each time, my insecurity and shyness held me back, and I just couldn't do it. We had been chatting every single day, sending pictures, discussing what we'd do when we met, planning when and where to have deep conversations.

But when the moment came to actually talk to her in person, surrounded by so many relatives, I found myself unable to do it. To be honest, her beauty was so captivating that it often left me at a loss for words. Her skin glowed every day, even without makeup. She looked incredibly beautiful—so much so that when I had the chance to talk to her, her beauty would leave me speechless.

And that's the truth. I had so many chances to talk to her during the wedding, but I always felt awkward, thinking, "What will everyone else think?" My shyness grew day by day, so I tried to cover it up by being awkwardly funny, throwing in some jokes, some of which landed well, while others did not. I kept reminding myself, "I came all this way to meet her, and I'm not even talking to her!" It was a strange feeling—wanting to be close but being unable to break through that invisible barrier.

But everything changed when she finally addressed it in a late-night chat. She was staying at her house, and I was at Gopi Paji's place. We were casually talking when she brought it up. She, being the thoughtful and empathetic person she is, sensed what I was feeling and addressed it directly—something I'm so thankful for. She said, "It seems like you're two different people—so lovely, friendly, and chill in our chats, but in real life, it seems like you're avoiding me, not talking to me, not even wanting to be near me. What do you think of me? Do you really want me as a friend, or do you not see that happening?"

When she asked that question, I felt an immediate wave of relief. I had been struggling to confront these feelings myself, but she brought them out into the open, making it easier for both of us. I told her honestly, "I want to be close to you, but with everyone around, it's hard for me to express myself. But after the wedding is over, I promise I'll be more myself around you." I knew that part of my struggle was my own shyness, something that might not make sense to others. People might think, "If you can talk in chat, why not in person?" But it wasn't that simple. I also carried insecurities about things that had happened between us, like the prank, which I had never fully explained to her. I planned to do it when we were alone—just the two of us.

After that conversation, a lot of things became clearer. I started making more of an effort to be close to her, to engage in more conversations—even if they were small. Her advice, to just talk to her and not worry about anyone else, gave me the push I needed to start letting go of my insecurity and shyness. She told me, "We're cousins. Talking to each other is not a crime. Don't worry about what anyone thinks; just be yourself, like you are in our chats." Her words were so kind and genuinely helpful that I started applying them immediately. I noticed the changes almost instantly. Day by day, I made small progress, chipping away at that tiny bit of insecurity I had left.

It wasn't an easy journey, but her patience, her understanding, and her ability to address what I was feeling without me having to spell it out made all the difference. I'm grateful for that. And with each passing day, I felt more at ease, more like myself, and more ready to embrace whatever lay ahead for us.

Chapter 9: Seventh Phase - Friendship Hidden in a Movie

How Did I Truly Become Myself, Show My Love, and Become Besties with Arsh?

The credit for our transformation from close cousins to best friends goes to this seventh phase, which I call **Friendship Hidden in a Movie**. So, how did we actually become besties? It all started after the wedding, during the post-wedding gatherings. A lot of our cousins had traveled from different parts of the world—India, Canada, the USA, England, and the Netherlands (me!).

One of our favorite things to do together was to have movie nights. After the wedding festivities were over, we would all gather, about ten cousins in total, and watch movies late into the night. I vividly remember the first time we did this; we were about to watch the movie "Annabelle: Creation."

The setup was simple but cozy. We gathered at Gopi Paji's house, where he had a bunch of mattresses laid out side by side, creating a large space where all the cousins could sit together. We'd chit-chat, watch the movie, scroll through our phones, and just enjoy being close to one another. It was a real bonding experience.

After the wedding, Arsh's parents allowed her to stay with us for the movie night. Before the movie, we had all finished dinner and cleaned up the house. Arsh was doing the dishes, and her trousers got wet in the process. She tried to hide it from everyone, and she didn't mention it. But later, I noticed it...

So, as the movie night began, all of us sat on those mattresses. I initially sat at the far right end while she was nearly at the far left. But then, the girl (Soumya) next to me asked if she could sit at the corner spot, so I got up and moved. Without making it obvious, I made my way closer to Arsh. Eventually, I found myself sitting right next to her. We decided to share a blanket since there weren't enough to go around.

The movie started—"Annabelle: Creation"—and I felt like this was my chance. This was the perfect moment to show her my affection, to let her know how I felt. I thought, "This is it, Greeky. This might be the only time you get." With that thought in mind, I waited for a scary scene, inching closer with my legs until they brushed against her trousers. She seemed to move away at first, and I wondered if she was uncomfortable. Little did I know it was because her trousers were wet and she didn't want me to notice.

As the movie progressed, and as I got a little braver, I decided to reach out and hold her hand. But before that, I thought she was avoiding me. However, when I finally gathered enough courage and let my fingertips brush against hers, she surprised me—she responded. She intertwined her fingers with mine and held my hand tightly under the blanket. My heart soared. I felt like I was flying through the sky, liberated from all my insecurities and fears. I knew then that she was comfortable with me, as she kept holding my hand even when we adjusted or moved.

This simple act of holding her hand filled me with so many emotions—love, care, and a deep sense of connection. It felt like she wanted to be with me, to feel my presence. At that moment, all my insecurities seemed to vanish. I wasn't watching the movie anymore; I was watching her. She was more captivating than anything on the screen.

So, there we were, holding hands. I wanted to show her how much I cared, how sorry I was for the prank I had pulled, and how much I cherished our friendship. I placed her hand on my chest, hoping to convey everything I was feeling without words. Then, I tried to get closer, brushing my leg against hers to absorb the wetness from her trousers, which I had finally noticed. I offered to give her my trousers, but she declined, saying, "I got wet while cleaning the dishes. It's fine; I'm comfortable." Once she said she was okay, I pressed my leg against hers anyway, just to help dry her trousers, ignoring her gentle protests. I loved every second of it.

As the movie continued, I held her hand tighter, wanting to show her that I cared more deeply than she could imagine. I wanted to convey that I was there for her, that she could always count on me. I wanted her to know I was her soulmate, her partner-in-crime, her best friend for life, and that she could be comfortable and safe around me.

What Did I Think About Her During This Time?

When I first reached out to touch her hand, I was a little insecure. I thought, "What if she gets uncomfortable? What if she thinks I'm being too forward?" But deep down, I felt this overwhelming urge to do it anyway, to show her my affection. Even if she had pulled away, I knew I would try again unless she explicitly told me to stop. I was just so happy, so excited, and I felt a deep joy that she was following along. When we moved around and still ended up holding hands, it was one of the best feelings I'd ever had.

To this day, no one has made me feel as special as she did that night. I've held hands with others in the past, but it always felt awkward or uncomfortable. But with her, it felt right, like I was a child finding comfort in the loving embrace of a parent. I held her hand throughout the night, and as the movie drew to a close, I found myself getting playful. I started playing with her hand, touching her long nails, enjoying the sound when I gently tapped them. Some of her nails were chipped, and I traced the rough edges, my fingers moving in circles, trying to show her how much I cared.

After playing with her left hand for a while, I reached out with my left hand to gently touch her left arm. She responded by placing her right hand on my left arm, and there we were, holding both hands for what felt like an eternity. It was a moment of pure love and comfort. This whole experience of holding hands with her made me feel like I was in my safe place. Like I expressed in the song "Deep Love Me," I wanted her to know that I would take care of her for the rest of her life. If no one else was there for her, she could always count on me. This Greek soul would love her infinitely.

After the movie "Annabelle" ended, Arsh and I decided to watch a more romantic film, *Kal Ho Naa Ho*. It's one of my all-time favorite movies for several reasons, which I shared with her—the beautiful dialogues, the touching scenes that resonate deeply with me, and most importantly, because the

protagonist's name is Aman, just like mine. This movie has a special place in my heart, and I wanted to share that with her.

As the movie played, my feelings deepened and expanded. I wanted to be even closer to her, so I positioned myself so that my entire body—feet, legs, and arms—was right next to hers. Feeling her warmth gave me a rush of oxytocin, filling me with a sense of love and being loved. At the funny scenes, I became playful again, wanting to break the intense atmosphere of affection. I tried to make her laugh by gently tickling her stomach, arms, and legs. I might have unintentionally touched her chest, but I continued my teasing, which made her laugh out loud.

That moment is etched in my mind—the way she laughed, then told me to stop, worried that some cousins who were still awake might see us. Her face, those expressions while she laughed and shook her head, were the most beautiful sights I'd ever seen. It's a memory that remains the highest point in my life, one that I'll cherish for years to come.

When she told me to stop, I felt two things: one, I should respect her request because others might notice us; and two, she was laughing uncontrollably and couldn't help herself. In the back of my mind, I had a slight worry (about 1%) that she might have been uncomfortable because of where I had touched, but I pushed that thought away. I knew I needed to respect her boundaries.

Feeling more connected than ever, I wanted to be even closer. I held her hand with my right hand, and with my left, I gently placed it across her belly, maybe even touching her chest. I laid my head on her left side, just below her chest, and hugged her tightly, holding her hand to show my affection. While I watched the movie, I started to feel sleepy. Being in that “safe zone” with her, my head resting on her, was comforting. After a while, she gently touched my head, and at that moment, I realized how much she cared for me. I felt like I could trust her completely, and whatever tiny bit of insecurity remained vanished.

As we noticed everyone else had fallen asleep, we stopped the movie and started talking, still holding hands. This was the moment I'd been waiting for. We discussed various things—from ghost stories that had us both laughing uncontrollably to her struggles with the money issue. I tried to sympathize and show her how much I cared. We talked about how much I loved her, and I realized she was getting sleepy. It was already 5 a.m., and we had started the movie marathon at midnight. I told her to close her eyes and rest, but I kept talking, sharing my feelings. I told her about how the prank I had pulled on her had backfired on me and left me depressed. As I shared this, I felt my insecurities and shyness fading away. I was finally able to be my true self around her again.

There were so many memorable moments during that night. The gentle touch of her fingertips was what gave me the courage to open up completely. We had so much fun playing under the sheets, teasing each other, and holding hands. Just having her close, hugging her, and knowing that she was there for me was the best feeling. The most incredible part was that she stayed up with me until 5 a.m., even though she had worked that day. She stayed just for me, and I'll never forget that. No one has ever done something like that for me. She is truly one of a kind, and I don't want to share her with anyone.

I remember when I was pouring my heart out; she fell asleep, just like a child does in the comfort of their mother's embrace. I felt this deep need to show my motherly love to her. I gently took off her white glossy glasses from her beautiful, charming face, which I had been gazing at the whole time. I had asked her not to speak while I narrated my story, just to listen. So, while she listened, she drifted off to sleep.

I wanted to ensure she was comfortable, so I adjusted her head on our shared pillow, making sure she was resting well. I pulled the blanket over her, making sure she was warm and cozy. I placed my right hand on her hair, gently playing with it for what felt like an hour, whispering how much I loved her. I massaged her scalp, holding her hand with my left, squeezing it every so often to say, "I love you." I kissed her hand and her forehead, showing her how deeply I cared.

I did this for hours until I noticed the morning light creeping in. One last time, I kissed her forehead, played with her hair, adjusted her position to make her comfortable, and held her hand tightly, kissing it for a long while. I checked her trousers, just lightly touching them on the top to see if they were still wet; they were almost dry, like mine. After that, I wished her good night in our WhatsApp chat and whispered to her that I loved her and would miss her dearly. I promised myself that I would always be true to her and to myself. After that night, I felt a deep sense of peace, love, and motivation. I was excited to be with her, to make her day every single day. From that moment on, I vowed to always be myself, keeping any insecurities to a minimum. I also felt like a mother watching her child sleep peacefully after a long day.

Looking back, that night was filled with so much emotion. I was able to express myself in a way I never could have if she hadn't held my hand and given me the courage to use my voice. That night was transformative. Even though she was sleeping, I didn't want anything in return. All I wanted was to be with her, to hold her hand for as long as possible, and to show her how much I cared. That very first night together, I felt like I wasn't depressed anymore—my depression was completely gone! It felt like I had reached my goal, achieved the friendship I had always dreamed of.

However, the next day came, and she didn't remember everything I had said. My depression never returned, but a minor insecurity lingered—mainly because she wasn't sharing all the details of her daily life with me, like what she loved doing or what she did each day. From her side, she was trying, but I didn't notice it. Over the following days, we continued watching movies together, holding hands, and our bond grew stronger. When I stayed at her house, our affection deepened. I was now able to hug her properly, not just the awkward hug we shared when we first met. I'd wake up early just to see her, to tell her how much I cared for her—like a mother, but even more. I showed her my affection, my love, and my desire, making sure she ate something before leaving for work, and, most importantly, I'd talk to her before going to sleep in her bed.

Let's not forget that eternal and everlasting Pantene smell. Even now, whenever I remember that scent, I feel an overwhelming urge to tell her how much I love her, how much I miss her, how much I want to hug her, kiss her, and just be with her. Every day I stayed with them, I felt like I was taking care of my own daughter. I made sure she was happy, motivated, and felt grateful about going to work, knowing she always had someone like me to count on. Then, after a few days, the sad day arrived—the day I had to leave Canada and return to my life without her.

Chapter 10: The Eighth Phase - The Farewell Morning

The day I had to leave Canada was filled with mixed emotions. I was staying at her house, and I woke up extremely early as soon as her mother left for work. Her dad was still at home, and her brother was sleeping in the living room with me. Arsh was in her room, sleeping alone. I woke up to use the washroom, and after returning, I noticed everyone was still asleep. Unable to resist the urge to see her one last time, I quietly made my way to her bedroom. My intention was just to sit next to her and gaze at her peacefully while she slept, not to wake her up.

But as soon as I sat on her bed, she woke up. With the room dimly lit by the light seeping in from the living room, I couldn't help myself—I hugged her tightly. I told her how much I was going to miss her, how I wasn't sure if I could manage without her for at least the first few days. She was sweet, lovely, and so caring that she soothed me for a while. After a few moments of silence, she hugged me back properly—a long, lingering hug that lasted for minutes. We didn't say much, but when she tried to pull away, I asked her to stay just a little longer. I knew that in the presence of everyone, I wouldn't be able to express my feelings freely or hug her for such a long time.

During that hug, I wanted to feel her close to me, to relax with her, to let her know how much I needed that hug. It felt like I couldn't survive another year without her by my side. I couldn't stop hugging her, kissing her forehead, her hands, her cheeks—everywhere I could reach. I wanted to show her my affection, to reveal my vulnerability. She had become my one weakness. I wanted to stay close to her, help her through her daily struggles, listen to her worries without judgment, and just be there for her. That hug, in the early morning quietness, will stay in my heart forever. I hope that the next time we meet, it will be even more profound than this time.

I still remember that we hugged non-stop for nearly 30 minutes. Those 30 minutes were the best moments of my life. I felt so relaxed, at peace, and completely comfortable. It's hard to put into words what I felt in those moments. I could fill pages trying to describe it, but the intensity of the emotions would burn through the paper. However, as we were lost in our embrace, we both suddenly realized her dad had woken up and was coming toward her room. We quickly started to pretend like we were doing something else—she went back to her bed as if she had been sleeping, and I pretended to be searching for something in my luggage, which was in her room.

After that, her dad stayed in the living room, and I took a shower. I cried a little in the shower, knowing I would miss her terribly. It was hard to compose myself and come out with a straight face, but after a few moments, I managed to pull myself together. I received a call from my dad, telling me to return to Gopi Paji's house, where most of my luggage was, to finish packing up. I left with a partial goodbye, knowing they might come over later.

Initially, Arsh was supposed to be at work, but later she told me she was coming over, and I was overly excited. I also asked her to bring a Rakhi because I wanted to put it on so that people wouldn't misunderstand our relationship. Eventually, she arrived at Gopi Paji's house, and she tied the Rakhi on my wrist—a precious moment.

Everyone finally seemed to realize that we were just cousins and nothing more. There had been a few occasions during the functions when people speculated we were more than cousins, but we were always clear about our feelings from the start.

After she tied the Rakhi, as per tradition, I gave her some money as a token for the protection she offered me with the Rakhi. She hesitated but accepted it after some persuasion. Then, my mom mentioned that they had also bought clothes for us, which made me realize I needed to give her more money. I wanted to honor the tradition and acknowledge the thoughtful gift. So, I asked my sister to call her to our room.

When she came up, my sister, mom, and I were in the room. I closed the door and tried to convince her to accept the money. One thing I learned about Arsh is that she is far more stubborn than me when it comes to accepting things like gifts or money. After a long discussion of about 30 minutes, she finally agreed, but only under the condition that she would give it back to me when I returned to Canada, or that we would buy a meaningful gift together. We eventually decided on a bracelet that allows you to send messages by clicking on it—so meaningful!

After she accepted the small amount of 100 dollars, we realized we were alone again for a short while. My mom went downstairs, and my sister went to the room of Lovepreet Bhabhi (the wife of Gopi Paji). I saw this as my chance. In the hallway, with no one around, I pulled her into a final, long hug. I told her, "This is going to be our last hug, not in front of everyone." I wanted to savor the moment, to feel her close to me once more. Hugging her gave me so much strength, motivation, and peace of mind after tough days. Even now, whenever I think about those hugs, I feel incredibly motivated and comforted, knowing that someone like her is waiting for me.

After our long hug, we went outside so everyone could say their final goodbyes. I put all the luggage in the pickup truck. Before leaving, I hugged everyone three times. The truth is, I wanted to hug my better half, my soulmate, my life partner, my lovely Buddhi, my everything three times before leaving. I also noticed her eyes were red, which made me think she had cried, just as I had done in the washroom earlier.

Each time I hugged her, I became more and more emotional, but I tried to control myself and not show it. I'd already cried enough before, but I think she sensed it. Finally, I left Gopi Paji's house. We drove away in the pickup truck, and in the car, I felt an overwhelming sadness. I missed her so much, but I couldn't put it into words. Plus, I didn't have internet access, so I slept the entire journey to the airport. When we reached the airport, I finally got a connection and messaged everyone—first her—to let them know I was safe and sound and about to board the flight, and then the rest.

Chapter 11: The Ninth Phase - From Insecurity to Peace

Once I reached back in the Netherlands, my insecurities resurfaced. Even though I knew Arsh and I had a solid bond, there was still that tiny lingering feeling that she wasn't fully opening up to me about everything. Thus began what I now call the final phase of my journey—"From Insecurity to Peace." This phase transformed me completely, and I firmly believe that there will never be another phase in my life where I feel sad, depressed, or insecure about our relationship again. What happened in this phase, and how did that tiny 1% of insecurity fade away for good?

After returning from Canada, I noticed my insecurity started creeping back up. We had agreed to share everything with each other, but I felt she wasn't doing that to the extent I was. I would share every little detail of my day, while for her, it seemed harder to do so. I knew she was trying her best and making an effort, but not quite at the same level as I did. She would say she'd share more, but sometimes it wouldn't happen. This difference began to bother me again until a random night when she addressed a topic that shifted everything—Jealousy.

It was a regular night. She had just come back from work, and as usual, we were catching up on WhatsApp with chats, voice notes, and one-time-view photos. Things were pretty normal and relaxed. Suddenly, she brought up the topic of jealousy. She asked me if I ever got jealous when someone else talked to her. I was honest and told her I did—especially when it was a guy around her age who made her laugh. I said it made me happy to see her enjoy herself, but deep down, I felt jealous too. Expecting her to say she didn't feel the same, I was taken aback when she confessed, "Yes, I get jealous too... a lot."

My heart skipped a beat. She explained that she felt jealous of Nancy, a girl from India who had stayed with us at Gopi Paji's house. She was around the same age as me, and Arsh felt a pang of jealousy when she saw me talking to Nancy or when I mentioned her in our conversations. This revelation was a game-changer for me. Hearing that she had the same feelings, the same emotions, and experienced jealousy just like I did made me feel an instant connection. It was as if we were both mirroring each other's sentiments all along.

Feeling that connection gave me the courage to address the insecurity I had been carrying around. I shared my thoughts through voice notes and texts, explaining how the prank I pulled on her earlier backfired on me, leading to a period of depression and insecurity. She was shocked to hear this, as she had no idea I had gone through all of that. She made me promise to never feel insecure again and assured me—once more—that I had never made her uncomfortable. She always wanted to be close to me, too. That night, I confronted all the lingering doubts about why she wasn't sharing everything, and she explained that she was trying but found it difficult to share every single detail. Her openness and the fact that she, too, felt jealousy dissolved the last remnants of my insecurity.

From that night onward, I made a vow to myself: to be completely open and filter-free with her, to say whatever came to my mind, no matter what. Since then, that's exactly how I've been with her—truthful, unguarded, and fully myself.

The very next day, I made several promises to myself. One of them was to recite the Japji Sahib path every single day. Not only because she does it, but also because it serves as a form of meditation that connects the soul to the divine. It brings inner peace, mental clarity, and encourages introspection and self-awareness. It guides me to stay disciplined and dedicated. More importantly, I started doing it because of her, and since then, everything I've prayed for, visualized, or manifested seems to come true. Even the smallest things, like reaching school on time when I expected to be late or manifesting her call amidst a busy day—somehow, it all happens. There's no logical explanation, and it's not about impressing anyone; it's just what I've experienced. This year, I even won the “Φλούπι” from the Basilopita, and I consider all these signs to be connected to her presence in my life. I feel so incredibly lucky to have met her, to know her, and to be with her.

I also promised myself that I would always finish my work on time before talking to her. Since then, I have never left my work halfway just to chat. I always ensure I complete my tasks first, unless I'm taking a short break. But I've never compromised my studies or work to be with her. Never!

Another promise I made was to always follow her requests if she sent a video asking me to do something. I'd comply unless I felt it wasn't right; in that case, I'd discuss it with her until we reached a common ground or compromise.

Most importantly, I've made significant strides in my mental well-being since she came into my life. I've always envisioned a relationship that's completely open, honest, and without compromises. Since Arsh became a part of my life, I've been incredibly happy, excited, and feeling wonderful every single day. Whether it's at work, where I've found newfound enjoyment, at home, where I vibe and dance by myself, or at school, where I now engage more openly with fellow students and even enjoy hanging out with them—I've changed so much. My personality has done a complete 180. From being introverted and not going out, I've become someone who enjoys social interactions. People have started to like me more; they enjoy my company and conversations. I'm more confident and optimistic in general, all thanks to her.

Since the night we talked about jealousy, I've been so open with her—something she's noticed as well. The person who took a year to muster up the courage to call her now eagerly waits for our calls every day. The shy guy who was hesitant to discuss anything related to sex now does so freely, without hesitation. I've never felt shy showing her my body, never felt body shame or discomfort. I've never felt awkward or hesitant to discuss anything with her, even things that most people would find embarrassing. I've openly expressed myself without fear, whether it's dancing in public or shouting out that I love her.

In that ninth and final phase, my tiny insecurities faded away, replaced by peace. I've learned to be myself around her, to embrace my flaws and my strengths, to be honest, and to love her without holding back. She's my anchor, my source of motivation, and my joy. With her, I've found a deeper sense of peace—a peace that I know will last a lifetime.

Epilogue: The Oath of Everlasting Friendship and Love

I know you will say again, “I didn’t do anything, it was all inside you.” But if it was all inside me, why did it never come out before? Why did people never say, “You’re so friendly at work,” or “You’re such a lovely person”? Why did people never connect with me like they do now? **YOU** are the reason why all of this is happening to me, and I don’t mind taking a few hours, a few days, or even a lifetime to write down and pen my thoughts about you, especially today, on your special day.

I might get repetitive, but that’s only because the feelings I have for you are so true, so deep, and so endless. Today, I want to take an oath—an oath that will bind our hearts together, an oath that will remind us of what we mean to each other, and an oath that will forever celebrate the incredible bond we share.

The Oath of Everlasting Friendship and Love

I, **AmanDeep Saini Singh**, also known as your Greeky, Big Head, and Buddha, do hereby take this solemn oath on this most special day—the 15th of September, 2024—to honor, cherish, and uphold the sacred bond that we share. This oath is not just a promise, but a declaration of my heart and soul, dedicated to you, **Arshdeep Kaur**—my Arsh, my Ms. Unstoppable Radio, my Best Friend for Life, my BBFE, and my Meri Buddhi.

I swear:

1. To Always Be by Your Side:

I vow to stand beside you in every season of life, whether in joy or sorrow, in triumph or struggle. I will be your unwavering support, your rock, your constant, no matter what life throws our way. Through every high and low, every twist and turn, I will be there, holding your hand and walking with you every step of the way. When the world feels too heavy, know that my shoulders are strong enough to carry your burdens alongside my own. When the skies darken, I will be the light that guides you, just as you have been for me.

2. To Cherish Our Bond Forever:

From the very first time we met, I felt a connection that words cannot fully describe—a bond that transcends time, distance, and circumstance. I promise to treasure this bond, to nurture it with love, trust, and understanding, and to never take it for granted. I will always remember how our friendship began, how it grew, and honor the journey we have taken together. I will keep our memories alive and close, like a treasure chest filled with our laughter, our stories, and our secrets. No matter what, I will always protect this sacred bond, because it is the most beautiful gift life has given me.

3. To Be Open, Honest, and True:

I swear to always be honest with you, to speak my truth even when it’s hard, and to listen with an open heart. I will share my deepest thoughts, fears, dreams, and joys with you, trusting you as my closest confidant. I promise never to hide behind walls but to let you see the real me, always. I will be vulnerable with you, not because it’s easy, but because you make it safe. Your trust in me is the most precious thing, and I will always honor it with transparency and sincerity.

4. To Make You Laugh and Lift You Up:

I vow to fill your life with laughter, to bring a smile to your face even on the toughest days. I will be the one to lift you up when you're down, to remind you of your strength when you feel weak, and to celebrate every victory, big or small, with as much joy as if it were my own. Your happiness is the rhythm that moves my soul, and I will always strive to see that sparkle in your eyes and that beautiful smile on your lips, even if it means acting like a fool or playing the clown for you.

5. To Respect and Honor You Always:

I promise to respect your feelings, your thoughts, and your boundaries. I will honor who you are and who you are becoming, supporting you in every decision you make, and standing by you with unwavering faith. Your dreams are my dreams, and your happiness is my purpose. I will never undermine your worth, never diminish your spirit, and never hold you back from becoming who you are meant to be. I will walk beside you, and sometimes, I will push you forward when you need that little nudge.

6. To Create Memories That Last a Lifetime:

I swear to create a lifetime of memories with you—ones filled with joy, adventure, deep conversations, and quiet moments of reflection. I will be there to share in your successes, to comfort you in times of need, and to be a part of every moment that shapes our journey together. Whether it's under the stars, on a spontaneous trip, or in the comfort of our shared silence, I will make every moment with you unforgettable.

7. To Never Let Insecurity or Doubt Separate Us:

I vow to trust in our friendship, to believe in the strength of our bond, and to never let insecurity, doubt, or misunderstanding come between us. I will communicate openly, resolve conflicts with love and care, and always prioritize our friendship above all else. I have learned that love is not just in the good times, but in overcoming the tough times together. And with you, I choose to face it all, hand in hand, heart to heart.

8. To Be Your Forever Friend:

Above all, I swear to be your best friend for life. To love you, support you, and stand by you as long as I breathe. No matter where life leads us, no matter the distance or time, I will be here—your Greeky Buddha, your Big Head, your confidant, your partner-in-crime, and your forever person. You are my mirror, my rock, my inspiration, and my home. With you, I have found a friend, a guide, and a soulmate. And I promise to never take that for granted.

This is my oath, my unbreakable promise to you, my dearest Arsh. I pledge to live up to this oath every day, to honor the love and friendship we have built, and to continue growing, laughing, and living life to the fullest—together, always. For every sunrise we see and every sunset we miss, for every tear we shed and every laugh we share, for all that we are and all that we will be—I will be there, bound by this oath, with all my heart and soul.

With all the love and strength within me, I take this oath today and forevermore. 🌟

Signed,

Your Greeky, Big Head, and Buddha AmanDeep Saini Singh