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With that, it's time for *One Indian Girl*.

Prologue

Some people are good at taking decisions. I am not one of them. Some people fall asleep quickly at night. I am not one of them either. It is 3 in the morning. I have tossed and turned in bed for two hours. I am to get married in fifteen hours. We have over 200 guests in the hotel, here to attend my grand destination wedding in Goa. I brought them here. Everyone is excited. After all, it is the first destination wedding in the Mehta family.

I am the bride. I should get my beauty sleep. I can't. The last thing I care about right now is beauty. The only thing I care about is how to get out of this mess. Because, like it often happens to me, here I am in a situation where I don't know what the fuck is going on.

‘**W**hat do you mean, not enough rooms?’ I said to Arijit Banerjee, the lobby manager of the Goa Marriott.

‘See, what I am trying to explain is. . .’ Arijit began in his modulated, courteous voice when mom cut him off.

‘It’s my daughter’s wedding. Are you going to shame us?’ she said, her volume loud enough to startle the rest of the reception staff.

‘No, ma’am. Just a shortage of twenty rooms. You booked a hundred. We had only promised eighty then. We hoped to give more but the chief minister had a function and. . .’

‘What do we tell our guests who have come all the way from America?’ mom said.

‘If I may suggest, there is another hotel two kilometres away,’ Arijit said.

‘We *have* to be together. You are going to ruin my daughter’s wedding for some sarkaari function?’ my mother said, bosom heaving, breath heavy—classic warning signs of an upcoming storm.

‘Mom, go sit with dad, please. I will sort this out,’ I said. Mom glared at me. How could I, the bride, do all this in the first place? I should be worried about my facials, not room allocations.

‘The boy’s side arrives in less than three hours. I can’t believe this,’ she muttered, walking to the sofa at the centre of the lobby. My father sat there along with Kamla bua, his elder sister. Other uncles and aunts occupied the remaining couches in the lobby—a Mehta takeover of the Marriott. My mother looked at my father, a level-two glare. It signified: ‘Will you ever take the initiative?’

My father shifted in his seat. I refocused on the lobby manager.

‘What can be done now, Arijit?’ I said. ‘My entire family is here.’

We had come on the morning flight from Delhi. The Gulatis, the boy’s side, would take off from Mumbai at 3 p.m. and land in Goa at 4. Twenty hired Innovas would bring them to the hotel by 5. I checked the time—2.30 p.m.

‘See, ma’am, we have set up a special desk for the Mehta–Gulati wedding,’ Arijit said. ‘We are doing the check-ins for your family now.’

He pointed to a makeshift counter at the far corner of the lobby where three female Marriott employees with permanent smiles sat. They welcomed everyone with folded hands. Each guest received a shell necklace, a set of key cards for the room, a map of the Marriott Goa property and a ‘wedding information booklet’. The booklet contained the entire programme for the week, including the time, venue and other details of the ceremonies.

‘My side will take fifty rooms. The Gulatis need fifty too,’ I said.

‘If you take fifty, ma’am, we will only have thirty left for them,’ Arijit said.