✨Episode 17: Sab Bane Sigma

Ms Chaya Singh was the class teacher of the class and she decided it indeed was the right time for some reshuffle. The reshuffling of seats sent ripples through the classroom. Manav, now paired with Ritu Raj, felt a twinge of sympathy for Ayush, who sat alone like a lone island in a sea of desks. He could practically hear Ayush’s internal monologue: “Alone? But where will I roast everyone from now?” Manav stifled a chuckle.

Across the aisle, Shourya and Advik, the intellectual jester duo, were now partners in crime. This promised to be an interesting combination, Manav thought. Shourya’s quiet wit mixed with Advik’s brand of mischievous humour could be a recipe for controlled chaos.

But his gaze drifted to Priyanshi, now seated next to Pratya Harsh. Pratya, the resident contrarian, was notorious for arguing every point, even if it meant spouting nonsensical gibberish. Manav winced internally. Priyanshi deserved better than being subjected to Pratya’s brand of intellectual torture.

Pratya: “Miss, the Earth is flat.”

Priyanshi: (raises an eyebrow) “Really? Can you elaborate on that theory?”

Pratya: “It’s just logic, yaar. If it were round, how come water doesn’t fall off?”

Priyanshi: (deadpan) “Gravity, Pratya. It’s a scientific fact.”

Pratya: “Science is a conspiracy, man. Big corporations made it up to control us.”

Manav imagined Shourya, ever the scholar, suppressing a groan, while Advik, ever the instigator, would probably egg Pratya on, leading to a classroom debate of epic proportions.

A mischievous glint sparked in Manav’s eyes. Maybe, just maybe, this seating arrangement wouldn’t be so bad after all. It could be an opportunity for him to step up, be Priyanshi’s knight in shining armour, rescuing her from the Pratya-nado of nonsense. He pictured himself, calm and collected, offering logical rebuttals to Pratya’s claims, impressing Priyanshi with his intellect and, dare he say it, his bravery.

The bell shrilled, signaling the sweet release of break. Manav stretched, his mind already formulating witty retorts for Pratya’s inevitable assault on logic. He found the boys huddled near the window, Ayush already riffing:

“So, Harsh, heard you’re single-handedly rewriting physics textbooks. Flat Earth theory, huh? Did you stumble upon some Einstein’s lost notes hidden in your cereal box?”

Pratya, ever the contrarian, puffed up his chest. “Cereal? Please, that’s government propaganda to keep us docile. I get my knowledge straight from the source, the cosmos itself whispers its secrets to me.”

Shourya, the resident intellectual, chimed in with a playful jab. “Ah, the cosmic microwave background radiation? Fascinating. Did it also tell you why your arguments are as hollow as a black hole?”

Advik, the mischievous one, couldn’t resist. “Maybe the cosmos is trying to tell you something, Pratya. Like, ‘Dude, lay off the cheese puffs, your brain’s getting clogged.’”

Manav, emboldened by his new resolve, joined the fray. “Or maybe, just maybe, the cosmos is simply trying to drown out the sound of your nonsensical ramblings.”

Pratya, flustered for a moment, spluttered, “You guys are just jealous! You can’t handle the truth because your minds are shackled by the matrix.”

Shourya raised an eyebrow. “The matrix? Pratya, the only matrix you’re trapped in is the one you’ve woven around yourself with conspiracy theories.”

Ayush, ever the peacemaker, tried to lighten the mood. “Come on, guys, let’s not be too harsh. Maybe Pratya’s just a misunderstood genius. Like a walking Wikipedia of wacky ideas.”

Advik, ever the instigator, grinned. “A Wikipedia of wacky ideas? I like that! We should start a blog: ‘Pratya’s Pearls of Wisdom.’ Daily dose of mind-bending insights, guaranteed to leave you both enlightened and bewildered.”

The boys erupted in laughter, the tension dissipating. Even Pratya, despite his initial grumbling, couldn’t help but crack a smile. He might be wrong most of the time, but he had to admit, these guys knew how to roast with intelligence and humor. Maybe, just maybe, there was a method to their madness after all.

As the laughter subsided, Manav felt a surge of confidence. He wasn’t just the quiet observer anymore. He was part of the pack, the one who could hold his own against even the most outlandish claims. And who knows, maybe this newfound courage would lead him to finally talk to Priyanshi, not just as a love struck cousin, but as a friend who could appreciate her intelligence and maybe, just maybe, even offer a witty retort or two to Pratya’s next cosmic revelation.

The air in the biology lab crackled with an awkward tension as Ritu Raj, usually the quiet one, blurted out a joke that hung heavy like a lab coat stained with formaldehyde.

All eyes, including Ms. Naina's, darted towards Pratya, who sat frozen, his face contorting through a spectrum of emotions - confusion, indignation, and a hint of dawning horror.

"So," Ritu Raj drawled, his voice barely a whisper, "did you know the scientific term for a micro black hole is 'Pratya's pp?' Because it's really small and black, get it?

A stunned silence followed. Even Ayush, the resident jester, seemed to choke on his own laughter. Advik, ever the instigator, buried his face in his textbook, shoulders shaking with suppressed giggles. Shourya, the intellectual, stared down at his dissecting scalpel, pretending to be engrossed in the earthworm before him.

Manav felt his cheeks burn with secondhand embarrassment. He wanted to crawl under his desk and hide in the world of mitochondria and cell membranes. He stole a glance at Priyanshi, her brow furrowed, lips pursed in disapproval. He mentally cursed Ritu Raj and his brand of dark humour.

Pratya, however, was not one to stay frozen for long. He slammed his palms on the table, sending tremors through the dissection trays. His face, flushed red, contorted into a grimace. "That's it, Raj! You crossed the line. My pp might be a singularity of smallness, but at least it doesn't collapse into a black hole of stupidity like your brain!"

The class erupted. Ayush's laughter finally burst free, a loud, infectious guffaw that echoed through the lab. Advik's muffled snickers turned into full-blown cackles. Even Shourya cracked a smile, his eyes twinkling with amusement. Manav let out a nervous chuckle, more to blend in than express genuine humour.

Ms. Naina, finally regaining her composure, cleared her throat, her voice stern. "Enough! Mr. Raj, such language is unbecoming in this classroom. And Mr. Harsh, your retort, while creative, was equally inappropriate."

The room quieted down, but the tension remained. Ritu Raj mumbled an apology, his face a picture of regret. Pratya, however, seemed oddly energized by the exchange. He puffed out his chest, a mischievous glint in his eye. "Fine, fine. But next time, I'm calling Raj's pp a 'quantum foam of insignificance'. Because it's so small, it collapses the very fabric of space-time."

The class collectively groaned. Manav felt a headache coming on. But as he looked around, he saw something unexpected. Priyanshi, despite her initial disapproval, was now fighting a smile. Ayush and Shourya were high-fiving, their eyes shining with a shared understanding. Even Advik, usually the troublemaker, seemed to be rolling his eyes fondly.

Maybe, just maybe, this was the kind of chaos that made their class, their friendship, so unique. A place where scientific rigor could coexist with dark humour, where intellectual sparring could lead to unexpected camaraderie. In the messy, unpredictable world of adolescence, maybe this was their way of connecting, of finding humour in the absurdities of life, even if it meant occasionally venturing into the dark side of jokes.

Manav sighed, a small smile tugging at his lips. He couldn't wait to see what scientific (and possibly inappropriate) metaphors Pratya would come up with next. This was going to be a long, hilarious, and possibly slightly disturbing semester. And he wouldn't trade it for the world.