



Little Fear of Heart



GENERE::nostalgia

Title:

Little fear of Heart

writer:

Tejuuu

About Story::

This story is Part One of a slice of life narrative, blending elements of nostalgia, coming-of-age reflections, and the emotional impact of fleeting relationships. The protagonist's journey intertwines past memories with present encounters, evoking a sense of bittersweet longing and unresolved questions. As the story progresses, readers are invited to explore the depth of human connections, the fear of losing someone, and the beauty of everyday moments that shape our lives.

Part One sets the stage for what may be a deeper exploration of these themes in future parts.

Little Fear of Heart

The train from Andhra Pradesh to Kerala sounded as if it was coming to take people on a journey, helping them reach their destinations. The station was crowded, filled with a mix of emotions and stories.

I noticed a daughter with a lot of luggage, standing beside her father. His eyes were teary, and they spoke more words than his pain could express. A father's silent support for his daughter's dreams—from dropping her off at school on her first day to now seeing her off on a journey toward her goals—is a poignant moment every father faces.

Nearby, I saw a couple with joyful faces, perhaps beginning a new chapter in their lives. The station was alive with varied emotions, and as I waited for my train, which was already delayed by an hour, I observed these small stories unfolding around me.

Finally, I heard the sound of the train arriving. The crowd rushed to board, and I managed to get my seat beside the window. As the train started its journey, I heard goodbyes filled with heavy hearts and saw hands waving to loved ones left behind. Every journey marks the beginning of a new chapter, filled with hopes, dreams, and farewells.

There was a hopeful glimmer in the eyes of the people around me, the kind that says, "One day, we'll meet again." I sat there, casually swiping through my phone, scrolling through YouTube shorts, just passing the time.

Next to me sat a woman, about 20 years older than me. I'm just 18. Suddenly, she turned to me and asked, "Where are you from?" Her tone was so familiar, like she knew me.

Surprised, I looked up and said, "Me? Are you asking me?"

She smiled warmly. "Yes, you, little one."

"Oh, I'm from Bhimavaram," I replied, smiling back. "I'm a student at SRKR College."

Her face lit up. "Really? My sister graduated from that college!"

"That's awesome! Where are you from?" I asked, now curious.

"I'm from Karnataka," she said, her smile never fading.

I was impressed. "Oh! You know Telugu that well?"

She nodded, "Yes, I do."

There was something comforting about her presence. She was dressed elegantly in a red saree, with a bindi on her forehead, anklets softly jingling, and earrings that matched her attire perfectly. It was going to be a one-day journey, and after a while, I got bored of my phone. I turned to her again, feeling curious.

"Are you a housewife?" I asked, wanting to know more about this kind woman who seemed so familiar.

As we continued our conversation, I noticed the yellow thread around her neck—a symbol of marriage. I couldn't help but smile, realizing she belonged to someone who must cherish her deeply.

"Yes, I'm a housewife," she confirmed, her voice steady but warm. "But I also work as a government teacher."

"Wow, really?" I said, genuinely impressed.

She nodded. "Of course."

Curiosity got the better of me, and I leaned in slightly.

"Can you tell me some interesting stories?"

She smiled, sensing my excitement. "Sure, how about I tell you a love story? Like Romeo and Juliet?"

I chuckled, remembering how I had studied it in my first year. "These days, no one loves like Romeo and Juliet.

I've already read it."

She laughed softly. "Alright then, let me tell you a story of pure friendship, from the heart."

My excitement grew. "Yes, please!" I said, eager to listen.

She settled in her seat, her voice taking on a nostalgic tone. "Listen, dear. I was just four years old, on my first day of school. I wore a beautiful red frock and carried a new slate. My dad dropped me off at the school gate, and as he said goodbye, he called me 'little Aswi.' He told me, 'This is your school. Be disciplined and make lots of friends. And don't be naughty like you are at home.' Those were the first serious words I ever heard from my dad."

Her story was simple, yet it resonated with me. I could imagine the little girl in her red frock, stepping into a new world, her father's words echoing in her mind.

When I stepped into the classroom, the teacher, who was wearing glasses, greeted me with a gentle smile. She guided me to the front and announced, "This is our new student. Let's give her a round of applause because she started her first day of school without crying!"

The class clapped, and I stood there feeling both proud and nervous. Then, from the last bench, a boy gave me a curious look, as if to say, Is she really not crying?

By chance, the teacher seated me next to him. As I settled into my place, he leaned over with a playful grin and introduced himself, "I'm Bhagath Ram Sundhar."

I blinked, surprised by his boldness. Without thinking, I asked, "Was I supposed to ask your name first?" He shrugged with a laugh. "It's my honor to tell you." What a strange boy, I thought to myself. Before I could figure him out, he suddenly asked, "Are you really not going to cry?"

I looked at him, trying to hold back the emotions I had been keeping in check. But the moment he asked, tears started welling up in my eyes. The floodgates opened, and I began to cry like a little kid.

He burst out laughing and teased, "Oh girl, I really thought you were strong!"

Between sniffles, I tried to respond, "Am I not?"

He reached into his pocket, pulled out a small kerchief, and handed it to me. "Here, take this. Use it. And please don't make my seat dirty with your tears."

I accepted the kerchief, wiping my tears, and said softly, "Thank you..."

The sound of someone selling popcorn breaks the silence. I turn to her and say, "So your name is Aswi?"

She smiles and nods. "Yes."

Curious, I ask, "How was that boy—so rude yet gentlemanly at the same time? You were only in second grade."

She laughs softly, reminiscing. "It's probably his upbringing. He came from a good family, and he was always well-mannered."

I remember her earlier story, and I can almost picture it —her taking his handkerchief and wiping away her tears. "I took his handkerchief and wiped my tears," she continues, "and even then, he kept throwing jokes at me. Those jokes still make me laugh whenever I think of them."

"In such a short span of time, we became best friends."

As she speaks, I imagine the small gang of four: Aswi, Ram, Padma, and Shref. By the time they reached fifth grade, the years seemed to pass by as quickly as light. "We had so many memories from school," she says with a fond smile.

Then, she tells me about the time her class teacher stood up in front of the class one day and asked, "Who wants to participate in the spelling bee contest?" Aswi admits with a shy grin, "I didn't even know most of the spellings back then."

But Ram, ever the confident one, said, "We can do it!" Without hesitation, he put Aswi's name forward for the contest. They had already participated in so many games as a team that he had complete faith in her abilities, even if she wasn't so sure of herself.

**As the train moves along, I turn to Aswi and say, “Hooo...
your school days really sound colorful, don’t they?”**

**She smiles, a hint of nostalgia in her eyes. “Maybe yes,” she
says, then continues her story. **“Every time, he would
always say to me, ‘Life isn’t just about studying and doing
homework. It’s about exploring what you truly want from the
bottom of your heart.”**

**She pauses for a moment, lost in thought, then adds, “Those
were the years when our friendship grew stronger and
stronger.”**

**The clock shows it's already 8:00 PM. She glances at me and
says, “It's late, little one. You should sleep.”**

**But I’m eager to hear more. “No, I want to listen to your
story. Please tell me more!” I plead with excitement.**

**She chuckles softly. “Okay, then....” She continues,
“There was a big day in my school when I was supposed to
give a speech. I was afraid to go on stage in front of the
crowd of students.”**

**“He stood up and shouted, ‘We can do it! You have the right
spirit. Go, Aswi!’”**

I heard his voice as they announced my name. I looked at him and walked onto the stage. With a deep breath, I spoke loudly and clearly. When I finished, everyone was surprised and applauded. I thought to myself, I need someone like him in my life—someone who makes you believe that no fear can beat you.

Later, I saw him sitting alone on a bench in the playground. I approached him and asked, “Hi, may I help you?”

He looked up, lost in thought, and replied, “We want to achieve more, but why do some fears stop us from doing what we want?”

I pondered his question and responded, “If life only had positivity, why would there be any negativity?”

He seemed puzzled. “I don’t understand,” he said. I continued, “Maybe it’s about balancing emotions. If God gave us only positives, we wouldn’t appreciate real success. Success is about overcoming challenges and negatives. It’s through facing and overcoming these challenges that we truly understand the value of our hard work and success.”

He thought about it for a moment, then nodded, as if a new perspective had just dawned on him.

He smiled softly and said, “I still remember the day I first saw you in that red frock, with such an innocent face. You looked like you were about to start crying, but then you pretended to be all tough, like, ‘Damn, I’m not a child!’”

I laughed, “And the funny part is, I really believed I wasn’t a child back then.”

He chuckled, “Well, your words are comforting me now, but you’re still a child.”

I protested, “No way! I’m in 9th standard now. How can I still be a child?”

There was a brief pause before he said, more seriously, “I forgot to tell you... My family is moving to another place. I’ve already applied for a school transfer.”

“What?” I gasped. “You’re leaving?”

“Hoo...,” I whispered, feeling a weight in my chest.
“So, I can’t see you anymore?”
He looked at me with a gentle sadness. “Maybe...”
At that moment, something shifted inside me. I felt a
fear—an unfamiliar fear of losing someone or
something important, but I couldn’t quite understand
it.

After that, we never saw each other again. No
communication, no letters, no calls—just silence. But
despite the distance and time, a part of me always
wondered what happened to him.

(Present on the Train)

The train began to slow down as it approached the
next station. The lady beside me, Sachi, gathered her
belongings with a warm smile. “Well, this is my stop.

Goodbye, and I’ll send you a letter soon!”
I nodded and smiled back, handing her my address.
“Okay, I’ll be waiting for it.”

She waved one last time before stepping off the train
and disappearing into the crowd.

(Aswin’s Thoughts)

After she was gone, I sat by the window, lost in
thought. What happened next? The memories stirred
deep within me, a mix of nostalgia and lingering
questions from the past. I couldn’t shake the feeling
that something was left unresolved, something still
waiting for closure.

