

# The Summer i turned thirteen



A BOOK BY VIVEK GUPTA

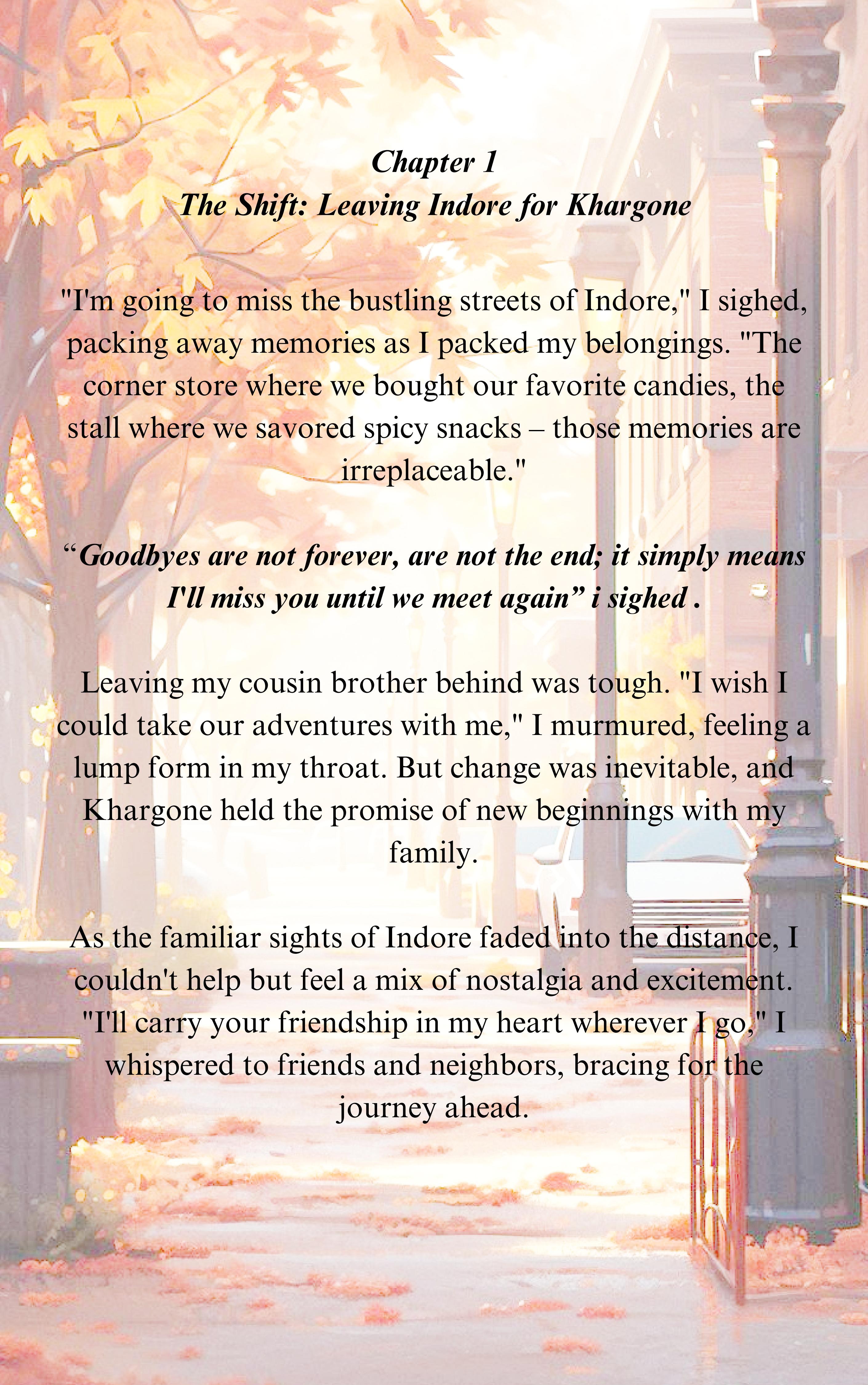
Dedicated to my dear teenage  
self -  
Chiku , with love

# *About*

*"The Summer I Turned 13" is my candid memoir about moving from Indore to Khargone in seventh grade. It's a journey through the challenges of adolescence, exploring friendship, puberty, and finding resilience.*

*It's a story about self-discovery and the power it holds in shaping our lives.*

*As the pages unfold, may you find echoes of your own journey and the resilience within you.*



## *Chapter 1*

### *The Shift: Leaving Indore for Khargone*

"I'm going to miss the bustling streets of Indore," I sighed, packing away memories as I packed my belongings. "The corner store where we bought our favorite candies, the stall where we savored spicy snacks – those memories are irreplaceable."

*"Goodbyes are not forever, are not the end; it simply means I'll miss you until we meet again"* I sighed.

Leaving my cousin brother behind was tough. "I wish I could take our adventures with me," I murmured, feeling a lump form in my throat. But change was inevitable, and Khargone held the promise of new beginnings with my family.

As the familiar sights of Indore faded into the distance, I couldn't help but feel a mix of nostalgia and excitement. "I'll carry your friendship in my heart wherever I go," I whispered to friends and neighbors, bracing for the journey ahead.

## *Chapter 2*

### *New Beginnings: Class 7 in a New Town*

Arriving in Khargone, I was filled with a mix of emotions. Reuniting with my family brought a sense of warmth and familiarity, yet stepping into my new school was like entering uncharted territory. As I walked through the gates, I felt like a small fish in a big pond, surrounded by unfamiliar faces and a sense of apprehension.

*“Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end” i thought.*

Despite my nerves, I held onto hope for the friendships and adventures that awaited me.

The classrooms were arranged differently, the hallways unfamiliar, and the faces of my classmates unknown. It was a stark contrast to the familiarity of my previous school in Indore.

As I took my seat in the classroom, multiple questions swirled in my mind. What would my classmates be like? Where would I fit in? Why did everything feel so different?

## *Chapter 3*

### *The Ghost of Childhood Friendships*

As I wandered through the corridors of my new school in Khargone, memories of my childhood friends in Indore danced through my mind like ghosts from the past. Their laughter echoed in the hallways, their faces etched in the corners of my memory. Yet, amidst the sea of strangers, their absence weighed heavy on my heart.

I longed for the warmth of their companionship, for the easy camaraderie we once shared. But as I looked around, I realized that most of my old friends had already formed their own cliques, their own tight-knit groups that I no longer seemed to fit into. It was as if I was a mere footnote in their stories, a distant memory they had long since moved on from.

*“Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never, ever the same” is what i always believed.*

The realization hit me like a tidal wave – I was alone, adrift in a sea of unfamiliar faces. The bonds I had once cherished seemed to fade into the background, leaving me to navigate this new chapter of my life on my own. It was a daunting prospect, one that filled me with a sense of loneliness and longing for the past.

## *Chapter 4*

### *Exclusion and Rejection: The Lunch Break Woes*

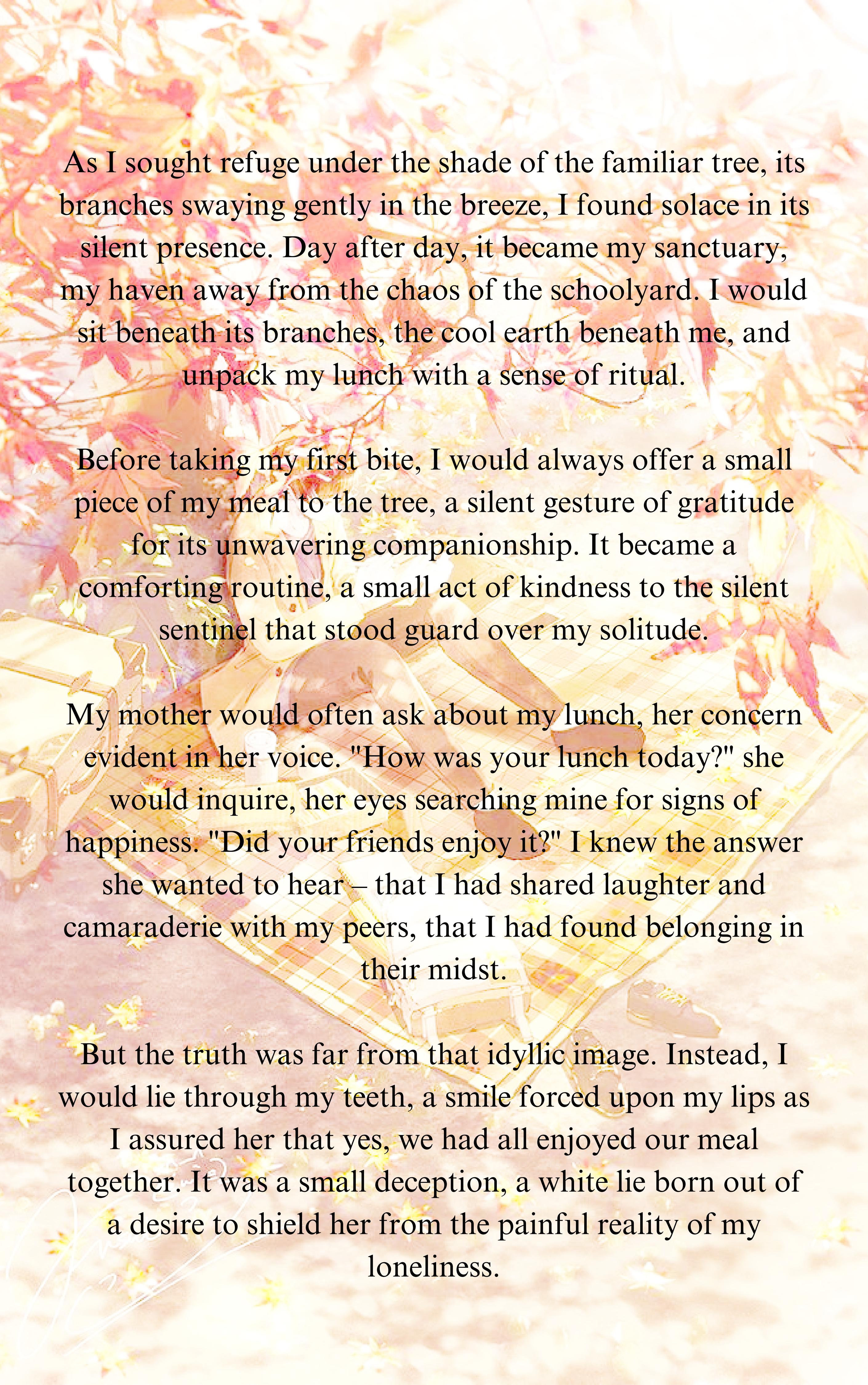
The sting of rejection pierced through me like a knife as I observed my classmates huddled together during lunch breaks, their laughter resonating through the air like a symphony of exclusion.

Despite my desperate attempts to join them, I was met with icy glares, cold shoulders, and turned backs. It was a stark and painful reminder of my outsider status in this new environment.

Day after day, I found myself sitting alone under the shade of a solitary tree, my only companion the whispering leaves and the soft rustle of the breeze. It was a heartbreakingly realization that I had no friends to share my lunch with, no one to confide in or laugh with during those precious moments of respite.

*“Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty” my mother once told me.*

In those solitary moments amidst the bustling lunch hour, the weight of loneliness bore down on me like a heavy burden. Surrounded by the laughter and chatter of my classmates, I couldn't shake the feeling of isolation that enveloped me. It was as if I were invisible, a mere spectator in a world that moved on without me.



As I sought refuge under the shade of the familiar tree, its branches swaying gently in the breeze, I found solace in its silent presence. Day after day, it became my sanctuary, my haven away from the chaos of the schoolyard. I would sit beneath its branches, the cool earth beneath me, and unpack my lunch with a sense of ritual.

Before taking my first bite, I would always offer a small piece of my meal to the tree, a silent gesture of gratitude for its unwavering companionship. It became a comforting routine, a small act of kindness to the silent sentinel that stood guard over my solitude.

My mother would often ask about my lunch, her concern evident in her voice. "How was your lunch today?" she would inquire, her eyes searching mine for signs of happiness. "Did your friends enjoy it?" I knew the answer she wanted to hear – that I had shared laughter and camaraderie with my peers, that I had found belonging in their midst.

But the truth was far from that idyllic image. Instead, I would lie through my teeth, a smile forced upon my lips as I assured her that yes, we had all enjoyed our meal together. It was a small deception, a white lie born out of a desire to shield her from the painful reality of my loneliness.

## *Chapter 5*

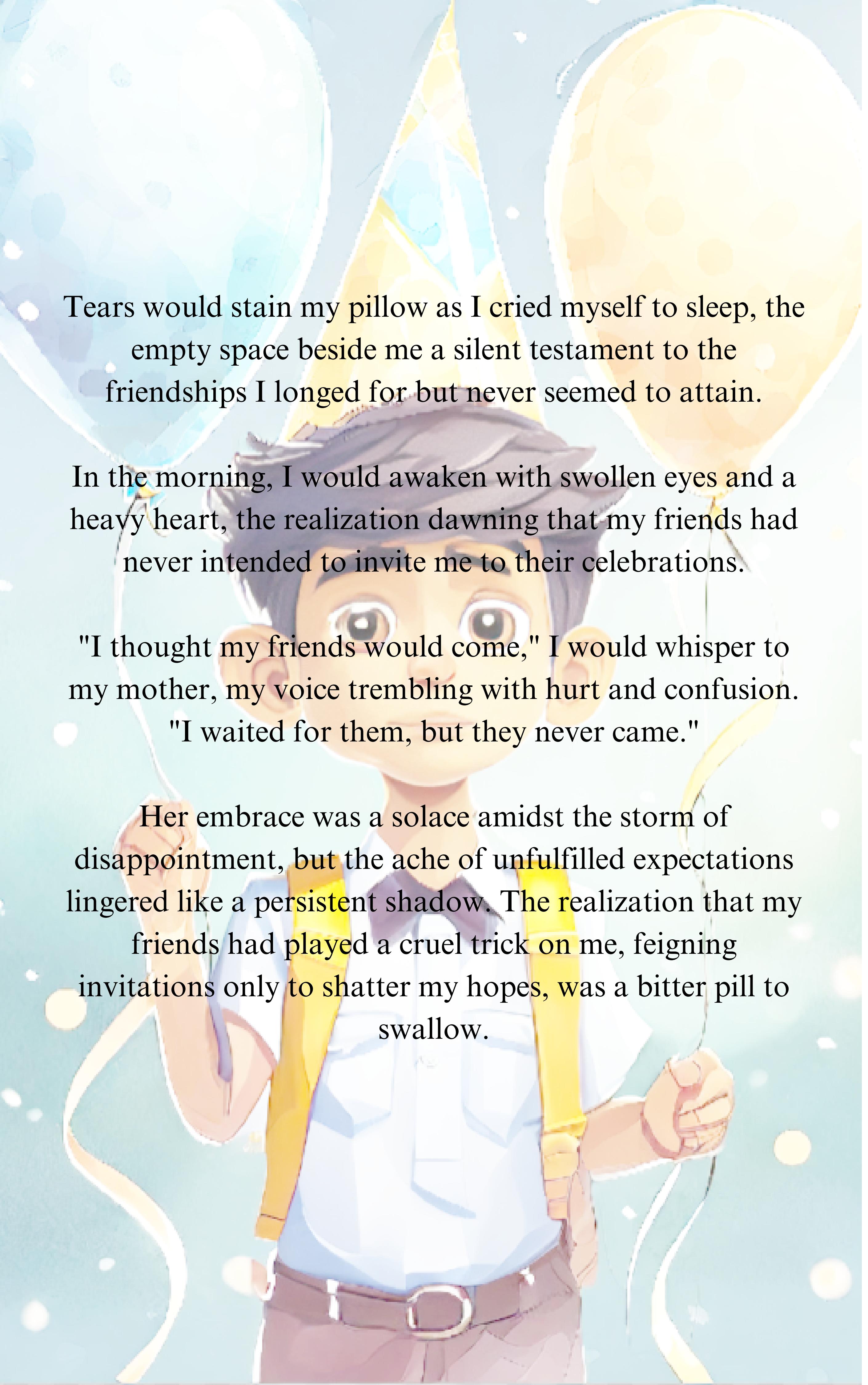
### *The Birthday Betrayals: New Clothes and Empty Invitations*

Each passing year brought with it the hopeful anticipation of birthday celebrations, yet each empty mailbox brought a pang of disappointment that cut deeper than the last. The absence of birthday invitations was a painful reminder of my exclusion from the inner circle, a silent rejection that left me feeling hollow and unseen.

Despite my mother's earnest efforts to dress me in new clothes, her hopeful smile masked the ache of disappointment in her eyes. She believed that the new attire would mark the beginning of joyous festivities, but the reality of empty invitations shattered those hopes like fragile glass.

*“Invited with words, excluded by actions; their promises ring hollow, leaving wounds deeper than any absence” i once read somewhere.*

The nights leading up to my birthday were filled with restless anticipation. I would lay in bed, my heart pounding with excitement as I waited for the sound of the doorbell heralding the arrival of my friends. But as the hours ticked by and sleep eluded me, the weight of disappointment settled in like an oppressive fog.



Tears would stain my pillow as I cried myself to sleep, the empty space beside me a silent testament to the friendships I longed for but never seemed to attain.

In the morning, I would awaken with swollen eyes and a heavy heart, the realization dawning that my friends had never intended to invite me to their celebrations.

"I thought my friends would come," I would whisper to my mother, my voice trembling with hurt and confusion.  
"I waited for them, but they never came."

Her embrace was a solace amidst the storm of disappointment, but the ache of unfulfilled expectations lingered like a persistent shadow. The realization that my friends had played a cruel trick on me, feigning invitations only to shatter my hopes, was a bitter pill to swallow.

## *Chapter 6*

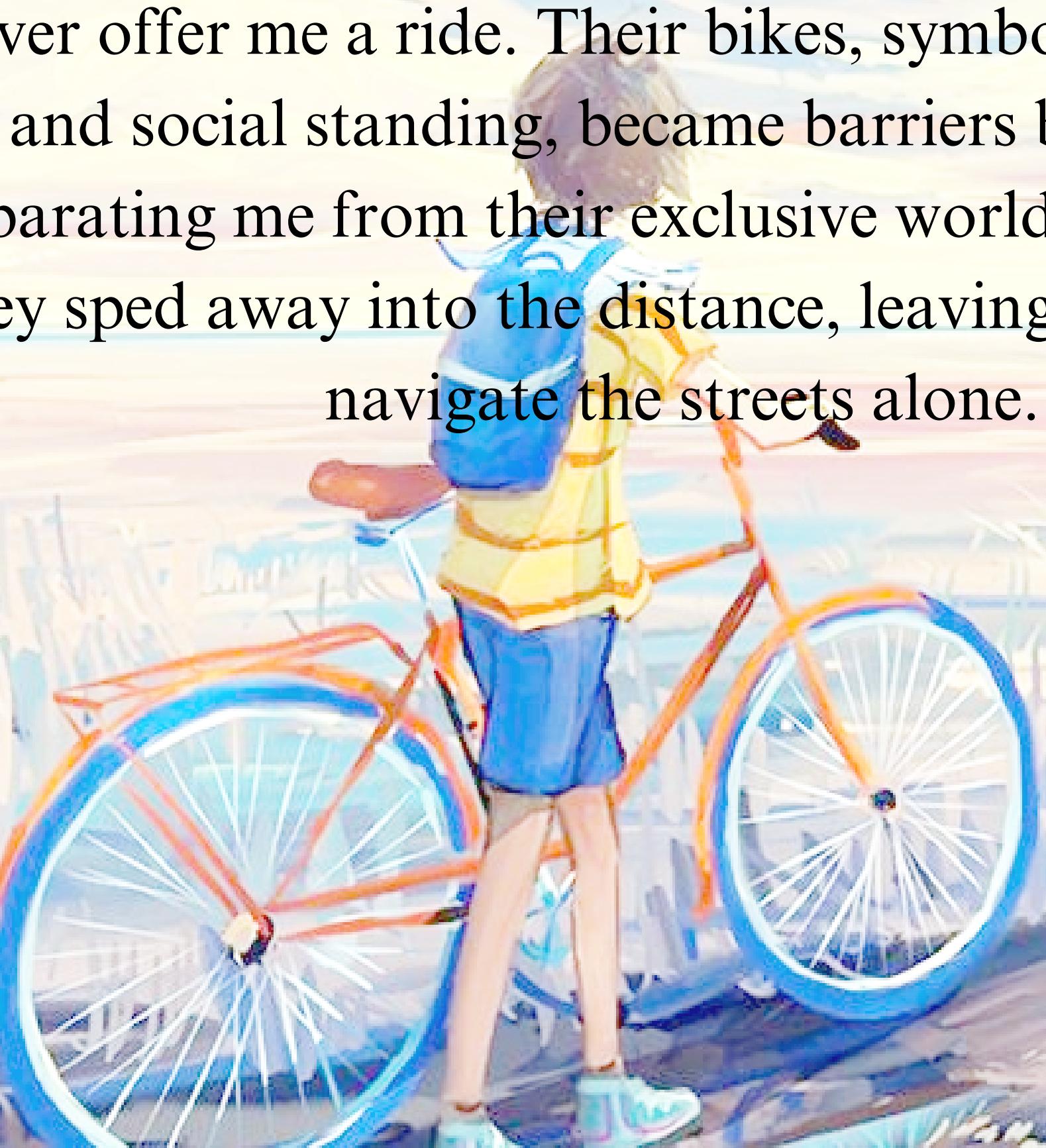
### *Pedals vs. Pistons: Bicycles and Bikes*

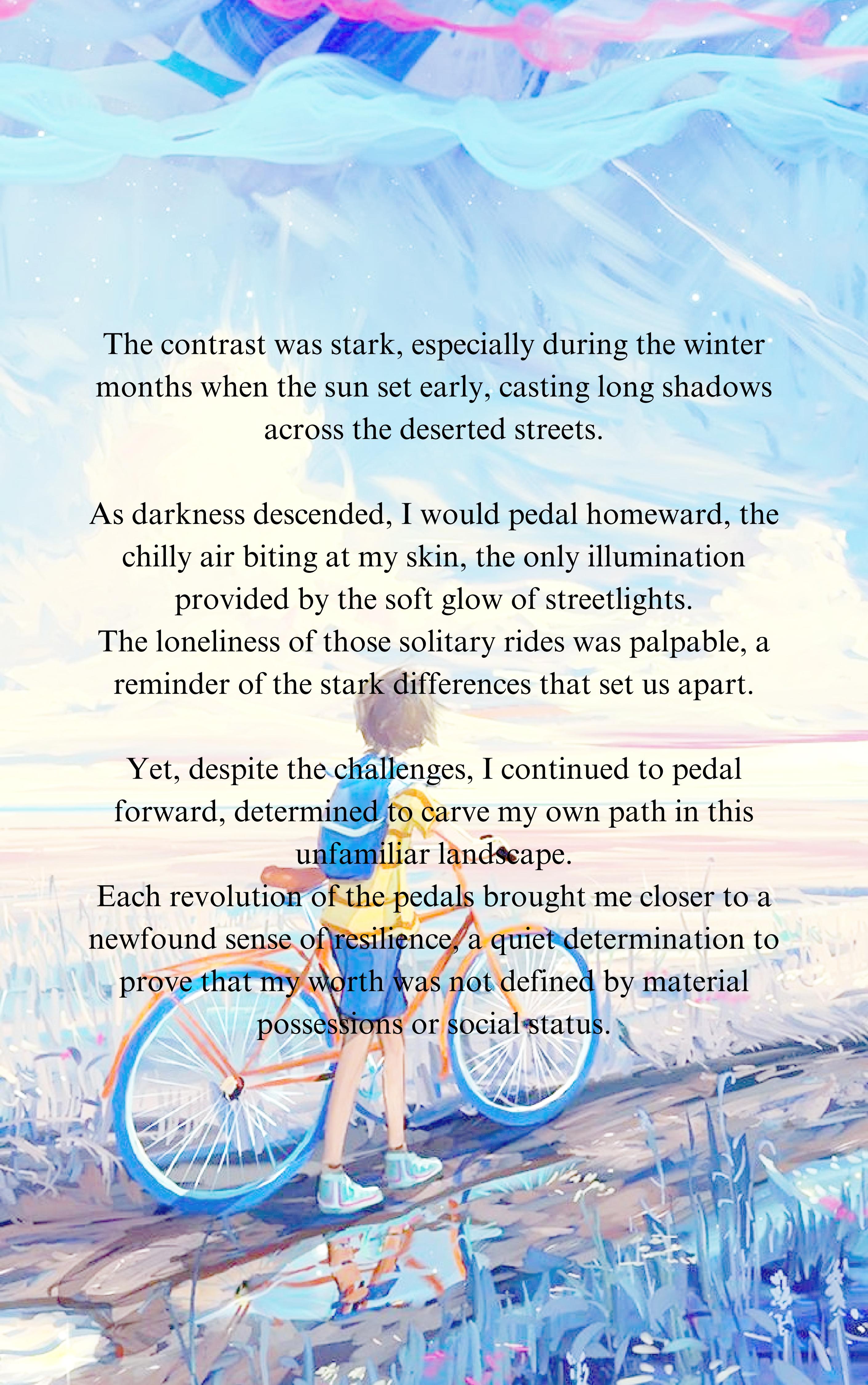
As my classmates whizzed past on their gleaming bikes, their laughter ringing in the air, I pedaled along on my modest bicycle, a silent observer in a world of shiny status symbols. Their bikes represented privilege and affluence, adorned with bells and whistles that proclaimed their superiority.

Meanwhile, my bicycle was a humble relic from my days in Indore, a reminder of the simplicity and modesty I carried with me.

*“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving” once said Albert Einstein*

No matter how late I was for tuition classes, they would never offer me a ride. Their bikes, symbols of privilege and social standing, became barriers between us, separating me from their exclusive world. I watched as they sped away into the distance, leaving me behind to navigate the streets alone.





The contrast was stark, especially during the winter months when the sun set early, casting long shadows across the deserted streets.

As darkness descended, I would pedal homeward, the chilly air biting at my skin, the only illumination provided by the soft glow of streetlights.

The loneliness of those solitary rides was palpable, a reminder of the stark differences that set us apart.

Yet, despite the challenges, I continued to pedal forward, determined to carve my own path in this unfamiliar landscape.

Each revolution of the pedals brought me closer to a newfound sense of resilience, a quiet determination to prove that my worth was not defined by material possessions or social status.

## *Chapter 8*

# *Paper Storm: Battling Annoyances & Searching for Acceptance*

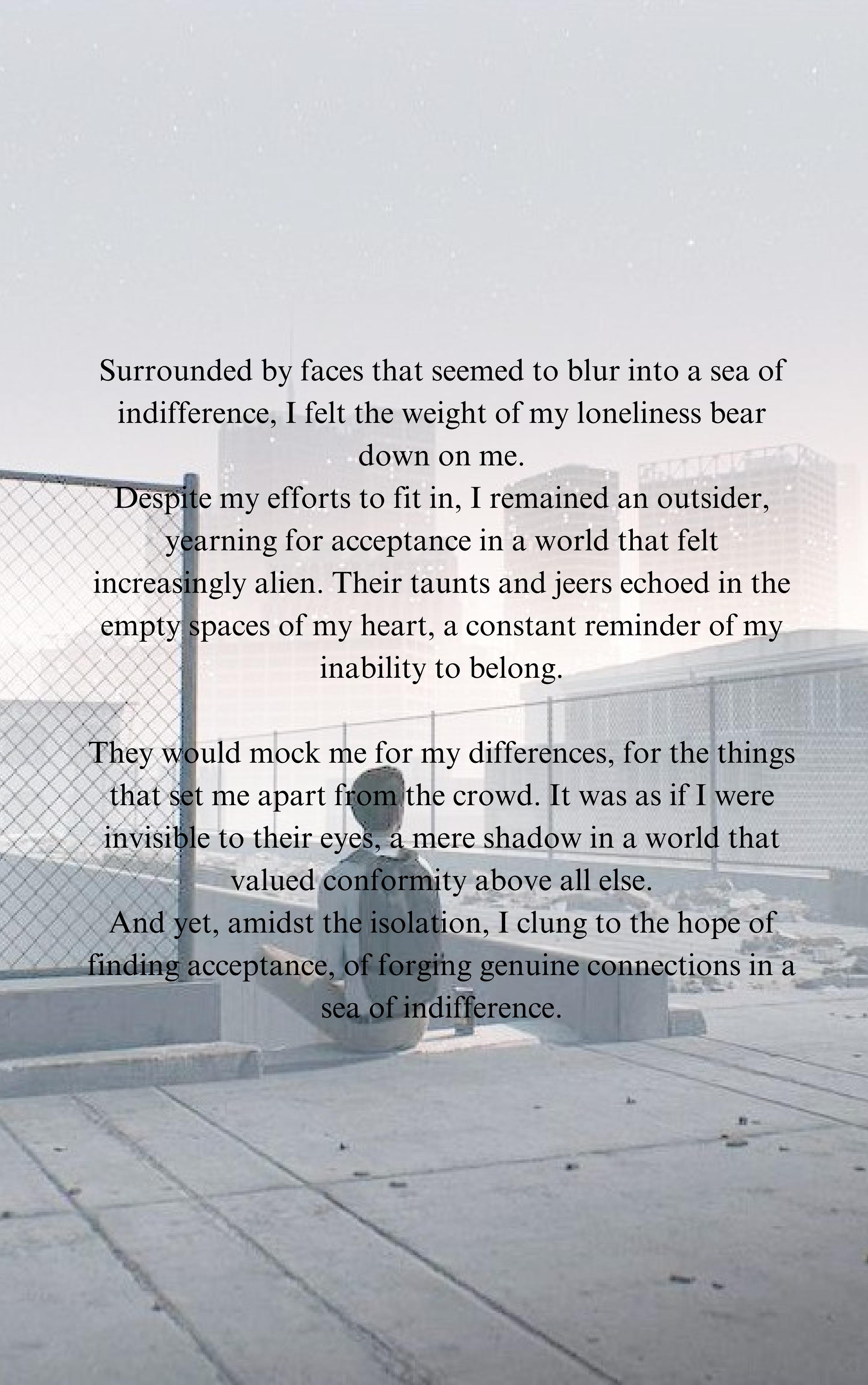
Paper balls and whispered taunts rained down on me like a storm, each one a reminder of my vulnerability in the face of cruelty.

The classroom, once a sanctuary of learning, became a battleground where I fought against the onslaught of ridicule and scorn.

They would throw paper balls at me, their laughter ringing like thunder in my ears. Whenever a mistake was made in class, fingers would point at me, blame unfairly placed on my shoulders.

*“The greatest thing in the world is to know how to belong to oneself” was what my father taught me from the beginning.*

It felt as if I were a target for their amusement, an easy prey for their bullying tactics. Yet, amidst the chaos, I vowed to stand tall and weather the storm with resilience and grace.



Surrounded by faces that seemed to blur into a sea of indifference, I felt the weight of my loneliness bear down on me.

Despite my efforts to fit in, I remained an outsider, yearning for acceptance in a world that felt increasingly alien. Their taunts and jeers echoed in the empty spaces of my heart, a constant reminder of my inability to belong.

They would mock me for my differences, for the things that set me apart from the crowd. It was as if I were invisible to their eyes, a mere shadow in a world that valued conformity above all else.

And yet, amidst the isolation, I clung to the hope of finding acceptance, of forging genuine connections in a sea of indifference.

## *Chapter 10*

# *Rising Above: Finding Strength in Solitude & The Joy of New Connections*

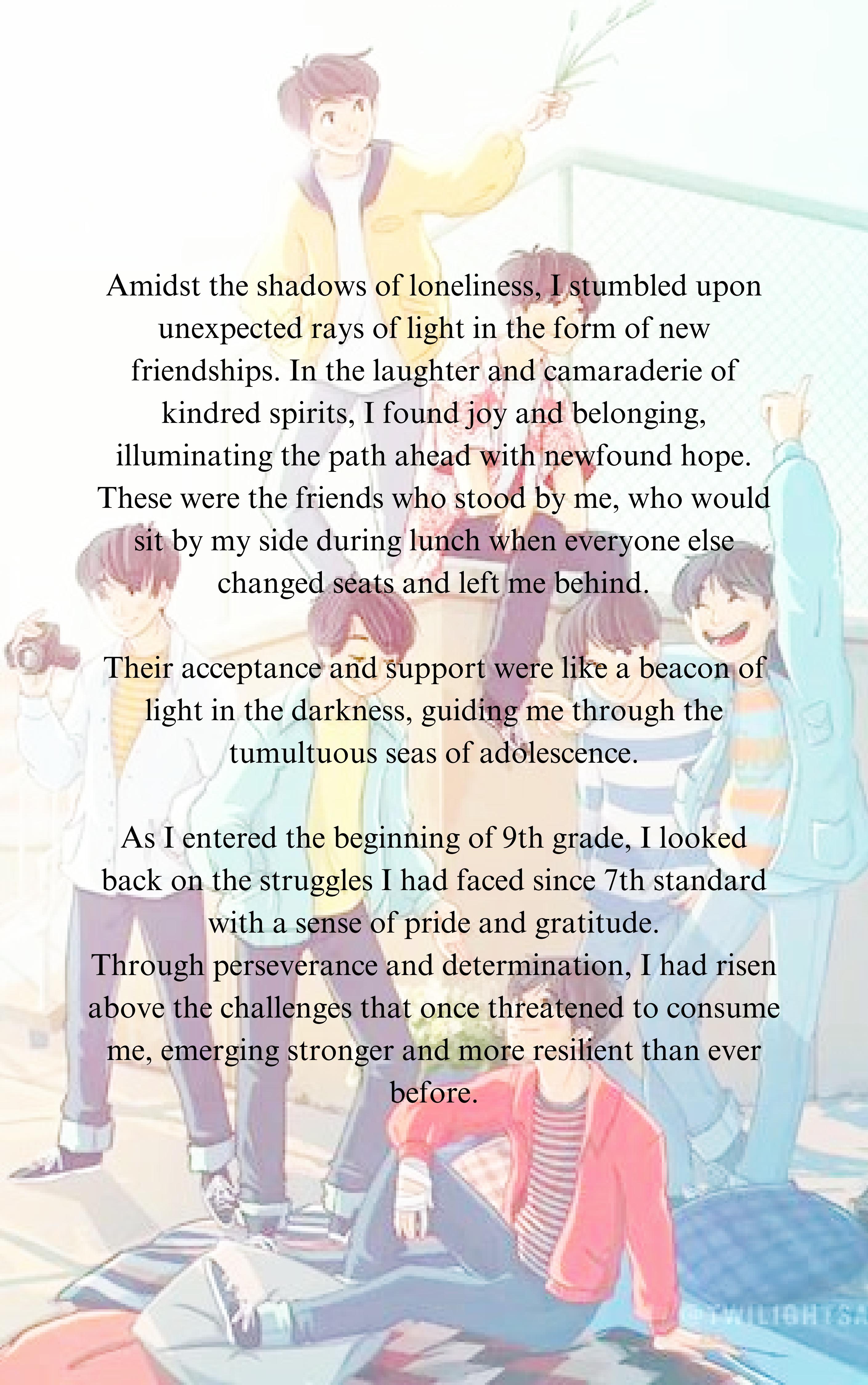
In the quiet moments of solitude, I discovered an inner strength I never knew existed. Alone with my thoughts, I found solace in the knowledge that my worth was not defined by the acceptance of others, but by the resilience of my spirit.

Solitude became my chosen refuge, a space for introspection and self-discovery amidst the chaos of the outside world.

*"New friends may be strangers at first, but their warmth and kindness quickly make them feel like old companions"*  
*was what i realized.*

It was during one fateful sports event at school that my passion for sports shone through. As I poured my heart into the game, my classmates watched in awe.

Their eyes widened with admiration as they witnessed my skills on the field. The cheers of encouragement and applause echoed around me, filling me with a newfound sense of pride.



Amidst the shadows of loneliness, I stumbled upon unexpected rays of light in the form of new friendships. In the laughter and camaraderie of kindred spirits, I found joy and belonging, illuminating the path ahead with newfound hope. These were the friends who stood by me, who would sit by my side during lunch when everyone else changed seats and left me behind.

Their acceptance and support were like a beacon of light in the darkness, guiding me through the tumultuous seas of adolescence.

As I entered the beginning of 9th grade, I looked back on the struggles I had faced since 7th standard with a sense of pride and gratitude.

Through perseverance and determination, I had risen above the challenges that once threatened to consume me, emerging stronger and more resilient than ever before.

## Chapter 11

### *The Autumn of Class 8th*

With each shared laugh and heartfelt conversation, I felt the weight of loneliness lift from my shoulders.

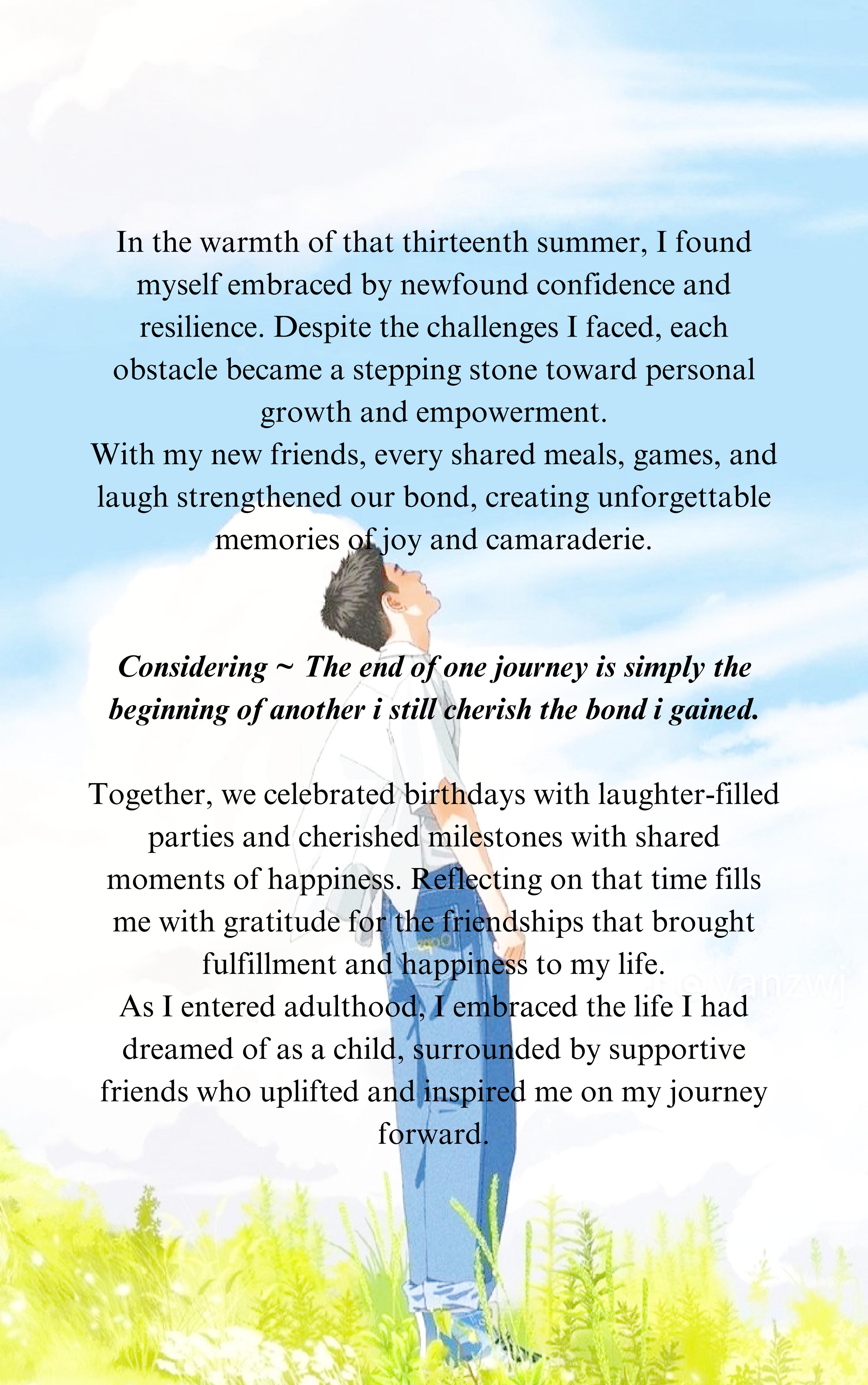
Surrounded by friends who accepted me for who I was, I experienced a sense of liberation and belonging that filled me with gratitude.

Free from the burden of seeking validation from others, I embraced my individuality with open arms. I recognized that my worth was not contingent on the approval or opinions of those around me. Instead, I found empowerment in the realization that I was complete and enough just as I was.

*“Happiness is a day spent with friends, filled with laughter and shared memories.” was what i learned .*

Through the ups and downs of my journey, I rediscovered the inherent worth that resided within me. As I reflected on the wounds of rejection and exclusion, I realized that holding onto bitterness only perpetuated my pain.

In choosing to forgive and let go of the past, I found the healing balm that allowed me to move forward with grace and compassion.



In the warmth of that thirteenth summer, I found myself embraced by newfound confidence and resilience. Despite the challenges I faced, each obstacle became a stepping stone toward personal growth and empowerment.

With my new friends, every shared meal, games, and laugh strengthened our bond, creating unforgettable memories of joy and camaraderie.

*Considering ~ The end of one journey is simply the beginning of another i still cherish the bond i gained.*

Together, we celebrated birthdays with laughter-filled parties and cherished milestones with shared moments of happiness. Reflecting on that time fills me with gratitude for the friendships that brought fulfillment and happiness to my life.

As I entered adulthood, I embraced the life I had dreamed of as a child, surrounded by supportive friends who uplifted and inspired me on my journey forward.

*And then finally i grew , i survived, i lived my school life and then , cut to the present where i live in “INDORE” ~ the city of my early childhood which never disappointed me and nurtured me when i resided with my cousin.*

*I reside here for completing my graduations and still hold stories like the 13 year old chiku did!*

*I'd be back when i would get tired with another story of my early adulthood signing off and sending love to the dear teenage YOU !*



*Best wishes, regards Vivek Gupta*