



# SHARDS

OF HIM, HER & ME

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# Chapter 1 -

THE SOUL OF ANDREW

As this little story begins, let me share a quote, I know it's cliche but let me say it this once :

"Love is composed of a single soul inhabiting two bodies." - Aristotle

"Yeah, I think he said something like that, Not exactly those words, but yeah, something along those lines. It's all a bit hazy after this long."

The noon alarm rang so hard, kicking Andrew out of some dream about a mysterious girl. His hand flailed around trying to grab his phone while he was still half-asleep and mumbling nonsense. Even through his blurred vision, he could tell he was running super late. The chills of fear went down his spine as he saw the time.

Shit, I'm so so late!" he groaned, finally opening his eyes. "There's only a few hours left to get this place cleaned up , before everyone gets here. They're probably already on their way..."

(Well I'll explain why he was in such a hurry)

I don't think there's a need for a flashback this early in the story , let me do the talking , I guess I am out of my mind literally talking to myself.

So what happened was...the previous day (Saturday), I was finally going to work up the courage to ask Maya out when we met up at the cafe after class. I had a whole plan mapped out to smoothly bring it up over coffee. But of course, things went the totally opposite way as usual.

(Andrew tossed a ball of shirt into the pile with a frustrated groan.)

"I got to the café, and like always, Jacob was hanging out with the group, just like bees drawn to flowers. He was being really nice, sharing his lunch with Maya and her friends, and he even gave one of Maya's friends "Emily " his soda to look cool. as I stood beside their table stuck i overheard Maya and her friends discussing how they all needed a place to hangout for the weekend. Like an idiot, instead of keeping my cool, I instantly went into panic mode and attracted their attention , hence I ended up inviting the whole damn group over to my place.

(He slowly picked up a pillow from the ground grabbing it firmly with his grip.)

Obviously, I then woke up crazy late today.

(The cloth mountain was growing exponentially high as he furiously gathered them up.)

I seriously don't want to mess this up. With the whole group coming over I hope I get a chance to talk to her alone , this could be my last chance to finally tell Maya how I really feel about her.

(He paused, staring off with a mixture of worry and determination.)

I can't screw this up. Not again. Not this time. This HAS to be the day I woman or man up whatever it is , and confess.

6:00 pm

At last, the task of cleaning was complete , just at the right time. Andrew bounced back onto his bed, breathing hard.

That had been disastrous and utterly exhausting.

( Yes , and mentally exhausting too )  
Yeah , Andrew agreed with a small smile.

Let me check my phone , Probably 15 more minutes before they start arriving.

His thumb automatically opened up Instagram , Where is she? Huh.. yeah got it.

her feed was barren as the field in a famine. andrew sighed.

Just relax andrew , he told himself.

Swiping through his feed...

he couldn't help but notice the amount of wild posts about some bizarre astronomical event. "a comet? No, two comets side-by-side? That's something for Instagram to buzz on for a few days I guess."

These fake stories and edited photos are really getting out of hand lately. I almost fell for a couple , before realizing they were photoshop pranks.

Whatever,

I have a bigger cosmic event happening right here at home. , the girl i have been in love with for years , since childhood accurately , is coming over to my home for a stay , "Fuck" it's a great day for sure.

I know I know , it's not the first time she is visiting my home since we have been friends for a long time but today it's different , today might be the day our friendship changes it may end up in the trash or ... yeah , just relax andrew.

Suddenly, Andrew's eyes went wide. "Oh shit! I totally forgot to get changed!" He bounced off the bed, running toward his wardrobe. Please don't let them get here before I'm ready , my lord !

7:00 pm

Just as andrew was buttoning up, the doorbell rang " ding dong ". His heart skipped a beat. This is it Andrew , andrew comforted himself.

"Coming!" Andrew shouted, drifted at the entrance , Took a deep breath and softly opened the door.

And there she was the beautiful Maya that I was ranting on and on about , smiling that smile that has always made me feel like the waves upon the shore washing away the pain in my heart, ceaseless and hypnotic, while I see her standing in front of me so luminous that even the moon shy's away.

(Well he isn't lying though always felt she was familiar in so many ways , just like her.)

"Hey Andrew..."

Maya's soft, sweet voice drifted out and everything else seemed to fade away. Our eyes locked and it felt like we were the only two people at the place in that moment.

While her friends were glaring at both of us from behind without a clue , Jasmin and her common friend smiled at me , the all knowing smile as it is supposed to be.

I was totally fixed on the ground by her warm black eyes, getting drowned in them as always.

"Andrew?" Her voice finally broke the silence. "You okay?"

I snapped out of it, my mind instantly falling back into place. "Y Yeah, hey...come on in everyone."



# SHARDS

OF HIM , HER & ME

# Chapter 2 -

THE SOUL OF MAYA

Maya's hair brushed against my face as she and her friends followed me into the living room where we were planning to study and talk about all the latest campus dramas.

(So we're really just gossiping then, huh?)

"Yeah, haha," I let out an awkward laugh, still flustered from that accidental hair graze.

Maya gave me a look and she asked . "Okay, what's with that goofy smile?"

"Nothing, it's no big deal," I waved it off. "Just me talking to myself in my head again like a weirdo. I really need to stop doing that."

(Dude, you did NOT just admit that out loud?!) frustrated andrew screaming inside.

I forced out an uneasy smile, realizing how creepy that must have sounded. But then Maya laughed - that laugh that never failed to instantly put me at ease.

(There it is...that's the stuff we like the most , her smile ...)

Why are you all standing , take a seat and make yourself at home !

"Hey andrew, where can I plug in my phone? The battery's gonna die," Sam spoke up as we got situated.

"Yeah, there's an outlet by the laptop setup," I pointed to the outlet.

"thanks dude." Sam replied.

Jasmin turned to Maya. "So did Jacob call you back ?"

Maya was scrolling on her phone, clearly annoyed. "Nah, he didn't and also I don't think they're coming."

"So it's just us three and Andrew then? Whatever, cool." Jasmin said while slightly nodding.

"Y-Yeah...I guess so," I stammered, feeling that blush warming my cheeks with the thought of finally getting a chance at being alone with Maya so that I could confess my feelings for her.

Jasmin caught my awkward look. As Maya was busy on her phone , Jasmin leaned in close and whispered three words that stabbed my soul.

"Jacob proposed today."

I couldn't process it. Couldn't breathe. The room started spinning as those words echoed in my mind on loop. Without a word, I turned and ran down the hall, softly closing the bathroom door shut as tears started pouring out.

I sobbed uncontrollably , Jasmin had just told me the devastating news that Jacob had proposed to Maya that very morning, and she still hadn't given him an answer yet.

(You poor boy...you knew this was coming didn't you Andrew )

I should have made a move sooner, so much sooner . I always thought our story would come together naturally, given time. But now...it really has come. It's Just that the story came and left without me in it.

I imagine Maya and Jacob's relationship like a relentless tide, carrying them forward into their storybook future, while I am merely a discarded debris - an unwanted piece of driftwood, left behind on the shore.

(Get your mind together, andrew)

I splashed freezing water on my face, gripping the edges of the sink.

(Andrew if you stay here any longer , they'll think you dozed off or something.)

With shaky breaths, I dried my eyes, but that ache stayed with me, carving itself deeper each time those thoughts came by. Staring at the mirror.

I plastered on a fake smile one showing off the sunshine and rainbows when I only felt the blackest of night.

I slowly headed back to the living room.

"Who needs a drink before we get started?" I asked everyone with a bit of a shake in my voice.

Sam and Jasmin both agreed, heading to the kitchen while Maya stayed glued to her phone.

Maya glanced down at her phone as a muffled voice message from Jacob played.

"Maya...what did you decide?"

She got up, phone in hand, and started pacing slowly around the living room. Her face was tense but she had a slight smile, like her mind was on something.

Walking over to the window, she hit redial on Jacob's number. "Hey Jacob," she spoke softly into the phone after he picked up.

"About what you asked me this morning...and yeah, I got your voice message."

Jacob just nodded silently, waiting for her to continue while she moved around in the room.

"Yes, and...what did you decide, Maya?" His voice was gentle but strained, like he was bracing himself for the impact.

"I know this is kind of an awkward way to have this conversation especially over the phone..."

"It's okay, just...tell me," Jacob insisted.

Maya took a deep breath. "I want to know why you decided to propose today? What made you finally want to take that next step with me?"

Jacob rushed into a monologue, raving about all the traits he adored in Maya , her radiant smile, her wit, recounting all their favorite unofficial date memories and inside jokes and meaningful conversations.

But Maya had zoned out, her eyes fixed on an old photo sitting on a shelf. "Oh god" she murmured, slowly approaching the frame.

"This is from way back in 6th grade. When Andrew and I were in the same class together , I guess this is the only class we were together in" She smiled wistfully at the childhood photo of her and Andrew , posing with both their families at a park, looking impossibly young and happy.

Jacob's voice continued in the background, but Maya was a million miles away by now,

Fresh teardrops started to trail down her warm cheeks as old memories came flooding back.

"We were all so innocent back then," she whispered, carefully lifting the frame. "Smiling without a care in the world..."

She was so absorbed in the frame and her life that she didn't realize she had ended the call with Jacob.

"Maya? Hey, what's wrong?" Jasmin rushed over, setting the glasses down when she saw her friend crying softly. "Did something happen? C'mon, talk to me."

Maya just shook her head, unable to find the words as she kept staring at the faded photograph, tears streaming silently now. Jasmin wrapped her arms around Maya in a tight hug.

"I just...I really miss them, you know?" Maya finally said it out loud between slow breaths.

"My parents...if it wasn't for me, they'd still be here."

Jasmin's heart was slowly feeling the sadness radiating from her friend, Jasmine hugged her friend fiercely.

"Maya, you can't keep beating yourself up over that. It wasn't your fault, not one bit."

"I just get so emotional whenever I see old pictures from those happier times, before everything went off track in my life"

Jasmin just held her for a long moment, allowing her to feel the raw emotions.

"You're so lucky you have all those amazing childhood memories with Andrew too," Jasmin said carefully once Maya had wiped her tears.

Despite everything , Maya managed a small smile as she reminisced. "God, he really was such a little weirdo back then. Always doing the funniest, stupidest things whenever I was around...but he had this way of making me crack up no matter how childish he was."

"Things were just...so much simpler, you know? I miss the days when all I had to worry about was Andrew making a fool of himself while our families hung out at the park."

Jasmin smirked a bit at that. "Oh yeah? I can imagine little Andrew being a ham around you for many reasons."

Maya felt her cheeks grow warm , she just avoided responding to that.

Just then, a sudden sound and chorus of curses sounded from the kitchen, followed by enormous laughter. Maya and Jasmin looked at each other confirming their thoughts.

"What in the world..." Maya chuckled, setting the photo back on the shelf and wiping her eyes one last time.

"Knowing those two idiots?" Jasmin grinned. "Could be just about anything you know anything !! "

"Let's check what's happening there," Maya said, a tint of curiosity on her face as she led the way to the kitchen.

Jasmin reached for the swinging door first, then flung it open dramatically. "What the hell is going on in he--"

Her angry cry got stopped in between as she and Maya took in the scene of chaos before them. Sam and Andrew froze guiltily amid an apocalyptic spill of ingredients and cookware around the kitchen.

"Well?" Jasmin put her hands on her hips, one eyebrow arched sternly. "We're waiting, boys."

Sam cleared his throat, looking at Andrew from sideways before mumbling that, "We were...uh...trying to make some Indian food?"

"But obviously it was an epic fail," Andrew jumped in with an awkward smile, running a hand through his messy hair. "That's the short version of the worst case scenario right there."

Maya couldn't help but laugh, she shook her head slightly and took matters into her own hands , Tying her hair back, she stepped forward and grabbed an apron off its hook.

"Alright you two, get out and let us handle this mess. Clearly cooking isn't either of your strong suits."

"But Maya--" Andrew started to speak but stopped as he saw the look of the devil from Jasmin.

As the girls set about cleaning and trying to cook something with the remaining edible ingredients, Jasmin couldn't resist teasing Andrew one more time. " Well maya likes Indian food you know ?"

"Hahaha," Andrew felt shivers when Jasmin targeted him with maya in the room, though he was still following Maya's work around the kitchen.

Sam cleared his throat, giving his friend a subtle elbow in the ribs when he noticed the stare. "Usually your parents do all the cooking, Andrew? Must be tough being on your own."

Snapping out of his day dream , Andrew said. "Nah, it's all good. I just order food whenever they're out of town. Speaking of which..."

He checked the time on his phone as he had to turn off the cooler in the room , while on the lockscreen - (a vivid photo of imaginary twin comets blazing across a starry night sky) Andrew felt an odd very odd shiver race down his spine trailing off as the haunting recollection of deep memories.

"What's up?" Sam leaned over to peek at his phone, then lifted his eye brow in confusion. "Oh yeah, I remember all those wild 'double comet' posts going around a while back."

Andrew was only half-listening, his mind drifting back to a crystalline night from years ago - a vast, moonlit field bathed in celestial light as those two brilliant comets arced across the heavens, their twin tails burning paths of fire...fire yes , it burns.

( What's happening today why is andrew getting dragged into my memories, why can't I speak to him , There are so many questions yet no one to answer )

"Hey, space cadets!" Jasmin's voice pulled him back to the present. "Dinner's ready, let's eat before it gets cold ."

Sam clapped Andrew on the shoulder as they rejoined the girls at the table.

As they settled in and began passing dishes around, Andrew's gaze inevitably landed on Maya once more, their fingers brushing momentarily as she handed him a plate. A spark of energy seemed to arc between them in that moment of contact rushing down into Andrew's mind as a cold breeze sending down goosebumps to his whole body.

Clearing his throat softly, Andrew forced his gaze back to his plate as that eerie memories yet beautiful , hovered in his mind.



SHARDS OF HIM , HER & ME

# **Chapter 3 -**

COMETS BURN , SO DOES THE PAST

### Early 17th Century.

Fear and ignorance cast a long shadow over society. Whispers of witchcraft tore through communities, tearing families apart and condemning innocents to the flames. Innocent lives were torn apart by false accusations of witchcraft, condemned by a society gripped by hysteria while the true culprits hid themselves.

### Present Day

The warm breeze carried a sweet scent , as Maya chilled on the sofa next to me , with a basket of ripe strawberries in between us . I wanted to look at her so badly.

"Want some?" Andrew offered with the intention of looking at her eyes , holding out the basket with a smile.

Maya felt her face getting warm as their fingers brushed during the handoff. She mumbled an awkward thanks, nearly dropping the strawberry in her flustered state. Jasmine watched the whole encounter, rolling her eyes dramatically.

"Well, I do need some strawberries myself. You could have asked me too, you know," Jasmine playfully mocked Andrew.

Andrew shyly shrugged and reached out to give Jasmine some of the strawberries.

Sam, completely oblivious to the tension in the room, he blurted out:

"We should play a game already! Isn't that why we're all here hanging out?"

Maya couldn't hold back , a sudden laugh at Sam's painfully obvious statement. "Well, I guess so , Sam!"

"I'm down for a game," Andrew jumped in quickly, a hint of desperation in his voice as he tried to regain Maya's attention while still having doubts of his actions after knowing about jacob.

Maya turned her playful, sparkling energy back on Andrew, propping her chin on her palm as she looked at him with mock seriousness.

"Oh yeah? So what type of game did you have in mind then, Andrew?"

Andrew felt his palms getting sweaty under her heated gaze. Before he could mumble out a reply, Jasmine jumped in with a wicked gleam in her hazel eyes.

"Actually, my cousins taught me this wild game when I went to Grandma's for a break..."

As she explained the twisty but fun rules of the game, everyone's interest was instantly piqued by the premise of low-key roasting each other. The competitive spirit sparked in their eyes at the wordsmith challenge.

"Oh, this is gonna be very revealing," Maya murmured under her breath.

"So who gets to be the first victim?" Sam asked with too much curiosity on his face, while rubbing his hands together like he was about to burst out some savage insults.

Jasmine curved her lips and thought for a while and then ,

" let's make this an interesting round shall we , for that I say we start with Miss Drama Queen herself - Mia

"this'll be fun..." sam blurred out while everyone else agreed in silence.

They started scribbling their anonymous words on scraps of paper in silence.

Andrew bit his lip, face flushed as he crafted the perfect surprising word to capture an unsung quality of emma while not being too rude.

( Andrew has always been this kind of guy throughout his life.)

At last, pens were still and they were ready to brutally dissect what each of them had written about Mia ,  
As the first word was flipped, laughter and outrageous groans exploded.

(This is going to take a while to finish, I don't know how they come up with these games, haha!)

As Andrew looked at Maya, she laughed so hard yet so gorgeously at the word he wrote.

Jasmine was relieved that it helped lighten the mood for Maya, especially after whatever difficult situation she had gone through earlier.

It was Andrew's turn.

"Okay, let me think," Andrew replied. Everyone looked at him expectantly.

He stalled for a moment, gazing out the window with a distant look in his eyes, until suddenly out of nowhere he spoke.

"Isabel" in a chorus-like voice.

Suddenly, a strange vibration filled the room, sending goosebumps across everyone's skin.  
Their visions blurred, only seeing something floating and landing on the floor again.

Maya blinked her eyes rapidly as Andrew collapsed to the ground . She rushed to him once she could see clearly while still wiping her eyes , she tried to wake him up, joined by Jasmine and a panicked Sam.

Andrew's eyes opened up again slowly , there was something different about him. He stood up slowly, seeming to take stock of his surroundings.

While Maya, Sam, and Jasmine started talking to Andrew, which he didn't hear, he just stood up and looked out the window.

The room fell into an uneasy silence as Andrew simply stared out the window for a long moment. Finally, he spoke in an almost old-fashioned english mixed with the touch of the latest version of English :

"Ah, the very air does not carry the same essence as I once knew. Yet the tapestry of the heavens remains eternal - it was the same ...

"'Twas the very same as when the two comets blazed brilliant streaks across the night, ripping a fiery rift in the sky, as we danced amongst the eternal flames we burned to death."

"Hey Andrew, what's up with the scary Shakespearean monologue? And why is the sky that color? I thought the comet was just a made-up story!" Jasmine spoke out in curiosity and fear.

Maya stepped forward, concerned. "Andrew? Are you...okay? Please respond..

Andrew's eyes finally landed on Maya. A look of amusement and affection played across his face

"Ah, sweet Maya. Pardon my cryptic words. 'Twould seem that fate have once again contrived to place me in your path."

He swept an exaggerated courtly bow.

"Andrew has momentarily estranged his mortal self and granted me sovereign governance. But fret not, I shall decipher this incident and bring andrew back as soon as I can."

Sam sputtered. "What the hell are you talking about, man? You're freaking us all out here."

"Little Sam, I would change my language down to your ways , so that you sweet children don't fret anymore"

With a short pause Joshua continued.

I'm not a threat children , I cant even perceive what has happened here.  
It is I who took an oath to never be dominant over a host ever again until I ascended from this reality , but it has been broken by nature itself without my consent , for a reason i hope."

"The best explanation I could give you is that the comets did this, as I have seen the same before at a very important moment of my miserable life."

"Andrew, please don't play games with us," Maya said angrily.

"No, little Maya, Andrew would never do something to hurt you.

I beg for pardon, but I guess I am stuck with you children for a while. I hope I go back to being the voice in Andrew's head."

The realization hit Maya and the others pretty quickly that they were in the presence of some other entity in Andrew's body, which he used to talk about as the voice in his head.

A few minutes passed by, and they sat before him while Andrew/Joshua stayed silent.

"So what are you really?" Sam asked.

"I don't know if I'm supposed to answer any of your questions, children," Joshua replied.

Maya spoke angrily, "At least tell us something. I'm worried."

"I beg your pardon, little Maya. I didn't want to make you angry."

Joshua thought for a while , silence was a sword close to their hearts while Joshua stayed in it , ( as fear , worry and curiosity grew in them )

"Okay children , I guess the heaven has given me this chance to speak my mind after all/ these ages. I shall take this opportunity to do so then, in the presence of some close friends. I'll speak of my origin and the story of my miserable life."



# SHARDS

*of him , her and me*

# **Chapter 4 -**

**"MAKE A WISH , ISABEL" !**

Cambridge, 1520

as you know I am Joshua ,

I was a young scholar at the prestigious Cambridge University, and was surrounded by brilliant minds debating the deepest mysteries of life. I devoured every lecture and philosophical text, endlessly hungry to understand the world through reason and knowledge.

Yet sometimes, even among such enlightening wisdom, I felt something vital was missing. The theories and deductions still felt disconnected from any real experience of the natural world they attempted to explain.

It was during a lecture on "Aristotelian" ethics that I first noticed her - a slender, dark-haired young woman lurking in the shadows. At first I thought she was merely a servant girl. But as the philosopher spoke, I found my gaze inevitably drawn to her look of wonder and curiosity - extremely out of place for someone of such modest means.

Her eyes shine with an unmistakable yearning to drink in every kernel of sacred knowledge like a rare vintage wine. In that moment, I sensed that both of us shared the same primal spiritual hunger at our cores.

After the lecture, I inquired discreetly about this mysterious young woman. I learned her name was Isabel Winthrop, daughter of the university's groundskeeper. Though barred from formal studies due to her low status, it seemed her insatiable thirst for enlightenment could not be contained.

Over the next few weeks, I noticed Isabel's subtle presence at more and more lectures across every discipline - seamlessly floating between dense theology discussions to impenetrable astronomical ponderings with equal relish.

One sunny afternoon, feeling inexplicably compelled, I decided to seek out this elusive truth-seeker consuming Cambridge's hallowed wisdom in silent rapture.

I tracked Isabel's wandering path until I found her seated in studious bliss beneath the gnarled willow tree.she was deep in her studies , as she failed to notice my approach through the surrounding emerald curtain.

"I suspect the cosmic tapestries adorning our hallowed halls seem mere gossamer half-truths compared to the grand galactic mural woven across your own mindscape," I finally spoke, startling her. "Indulge me with the honor of an hour's conversation in your esteemed company, noble secker."

Sam at the present erupted " wait ..wait.. wait.. wait ...  
What's with the Shakespearean English turn it down a little man.

Joshua looks at Sam with a playful smile

And he continued..

"I think the cosmic wonders we talk about are like small pieces of a bigger picture compared to the vast universe inside your mind. Can I join in your study? I'd really appreciate your company."

Isabel's wide azure eyes opened in surprise at the intrusion upon her refuge. Yet soon, the most enchanting smile curved her soft lips as she observed me.

"Well-spoken words for one who has just glimpsed the depths of my studies without proper context," she replied in a melodious voice that seemed to enrapture the very surrounding breezes. ""My fervent contemplation, etched upon my furrowed brow, likely portrays my passion more vividly than any classic texts."."

And with that singularly bewitching response, I found myself effortlessly enraptured within Isabel's cosmic songbird spell. We conversed for what felt simultaneously like an infinite age and a mere fleeting moment - two unabashed seekers harmonizing our shared reverence as we roamed every untrodden avenue of thought and perception. our souls harmonized in a sacred dance of discovery and reverence.

With each subsequent willow tree rendezvous over the following months, I discovered layers upon layers within Isabel's kaleidoscopic mentality that inspired, challenged, and expanded my understanding of reality in new ways. The manner in which she synthesized empirical principles with poetic intuitive insights left me utterly spellbound.

But beyond the intellectual stimulation, I also became acutely aware of the subtle yet powerful effect her very presence seemed to catalyze within me... and I would never be who I am at present without her.

Joshua paused with that sentence , and the room fell silent with all the information that was put out by Joshua, to the children before him , which was way more than they could process , as it is supposed to be.

Maya fired off her questions, her worry for andrew , palpable in the air.

"So where did she go?

And why haven't we heard of you before? Weren't you supposed to be famous or something?

"A flicker of concern crossed Andrew's face, mirroring the unease in Joshua's demeanor.

it was Jasmin who urged Joshua to continue, her tone a mix of curiosity and impatience.

Do tell us the rest Joshua ,

We're all worried about andrew and also to know what happened , only your explanation could help us with andrew , even if we can't quite grasp its whole depth ."

Sam's voice, clear and resolute, cut through the tension like a beacon of shared concern. "We all are worried for Andrew."

"I am too , Little Sam, I am too , Joshua added.

Andrew meant more to me than just a host. He's been a beacon of light in my world filled with my past and thoughts. It's been ages since I've connected with someone so genuine."

I will complete my tale children as it's not just about me now isn't it.

In Salem Village,

amid the untamed wilderness that whispered secrets of untold ages, we carved out a sanctuary—a rustic cottage nestled amidst towering trees and murmuring streams. There, amidst the tranquil beauty of the New home as we called it, we cultivated the land and explored the ancient woods, finding solace in the rhythm of nature's eternal dance.

But our existence soon began to unravel mystery and fear among the villagers as Whispers of witchcraft and devilry began to swirl around us, fueled by the suspicions of the Puritan community. Despite Isabel's sage wisdom and my rationality, we could not escape the relentless tide of paranoia that swept through Salem Village like a raging tempest.

The situation got out of hand as,

The villagers were angered by recent deaths near the forest , the blame was almost at the same moment as it was discovered and was given to the dwellers in the woods. who are assumed to be in practice of witchcraft.

Then came the night of reckoning,

when an angry mob, led by the zealous Reverend Parris, descended upon our cottage like avenging angels of wrath. Brandishing torches and cries of condemnation, they accused us of consorting with dark forces and practicing forbidden magic, casting us as scapegoats in a sinister drama of fear and hysteria.

Even the gods could not have reasoned with them. Anger covered their hearts and minds as they threw their torches of fire on to the structure we called home.

as the flames licked hungrily at the wooden beams of our sanctuary and the air was thick with the acrid scent of smoke, I found myself holding Isabel close amidst the chaos. With each crack of timber and roar of the inferno, my heart pounded in my chest, a symphony of fear and desperation echoing in my ears.

Yet amidst the chaos, amidst the very brink of oblivion, I looked into Isabel's eyes—eyes that had seen the depths of despair and the heights of joy, eyes that held the essence of everything that was pure and good in this world. And in that moment, as two comets streaked fearlessly across the heavens above, their fiery tails painting the night sky with an ethereal glow, I felt something stir within me—a primal, desperate longing that defied all logic and reason.

"Isabel," I whispered as the smoke got my words, my voice barely audible above the roar of the flames.

I roared loudly as I could :

"Make a wish , my heart ". A wish to immortalize our love, to defy the ravages of time and fate."

As the fire raged around us and the world seemed to collapse into chaos, Isabel's gaze met mine with a quiet strength , a silent understanding that transcended words. And in that fleeting moment, as the two comets blazed a trail across the heavens, we made our wish—a wish for our love to endure, eternal and unyielding, beyond the confines of mortality and the passage of time.

And as the flames closed in and the darkness threatened to consume us, I held Isabel tightly in my arms, clinging to her with every fiber of my being. And in that final, desperate embrace, she sang softly with her last breath :

"Amidst comets' whimsy, our hearts entwine,  
In our laughter and tears, our love does shine."

As tears streamed down Maya's cheeks, maya felt a pang of sorrow pierce his heart. "I'm so sorry, joshua," she whispered, her voice thick with emotion.

The question hung heavy in the air, of whether the wish got granted or not , and while sam and others pondered on that question , Joshua's gaze drifted to the heavens above and spoke slowly.. "Our wish did come true, little maya " he admitted, his voice trembling with the weight of their shared history. "But it came with a cost , too heavy for our shoulders."

Sam and Jasmin remained silent, their expressions a mix of belief and empathy.

"Our souls were bound by fate, destined to find each other time and time again," Joshua explained, his voice filled with a poignant sadness.

"But as we enjoyed the sweetness of it all , we never saw the hidden bitterness coming through eventually , in my countless lifetimes with her, we were torn apart every single lifetime , never being allowed to be together."

He took a deep breath, the memories of their countless reincarnations flooding his mind. "You may have heard of us in history books," he continued, his voice wavering with emotion. "Names like Romeo and Juliet , Lancelot and Guinevere . — famous lovers torn apart by circumstance, just like us."

As the names echoed through the room, a wave of shock and disbelief swept over Maya, Sam, and Jasmin. Chaos erupted as each of them was plunged into a whirlwind of assumptions and conjectures.

"Wait, you mean you were Romeo and Juliet?" Maya gasped, her eyes wide with incredulity.

Sam's mind raced, trying to make sense of the revelation. "So you were Tristan and Isolde too?"

Jasmin's heart ached at the tragic irony of it all. "How could fate be so cruel?"

In the midst of the chaos, Joshua stepped forward, his voice steady amidst the turmoil. "Isabel and I transcended time," he explained, his words carrying a weight of inevitability. "Past and future were inconsequential to our love. That's why in each reincarnation, we found ourselves in different eras, different cultures."

The room fell silent as his words sank in, the implications of their timeless love hanging heavy in the air. In that moment, they realized the true magnitude of Joshua and Isabel's sacrifice.

Maya's voice trembled as she asked the question that hung heavy in the air. "What happened to Isabel?"

With a heavy heart, Joshua hesitated before revealing the truth about Isabel's fate. "Maya," he began, his voice filled with sorrow, "Isabel's soul was meant to find its home within you."

Maya's breath caught in her throat as she absorbed the weight of his words. Sam and Jasmin exchanged worried glances, realizing the gravity of the situation.

"I was supposed to be Isabel's host?" Maya whispered, her voice trembling with emotion.

Joshua's nod was heavy with sorrow, his eyes clouded with regret. "Yes, Maya. But that's where everything went wrong" he confessed, his voice trembling with emotion. "We were meant to awaken together, only when we could finally live together in happiness. That was our solemn pact."

A heavy silence filled the room as the weight of their shared fate settled over them like a suffocating blanket. Maya's heart clenched with anguish.

"But she's not here now," Maya whispered, her voice cracking with emotion.

"And after all these years of trying, of holding onto hope... we couldn't bear to ruin another host's life." Joshua replied.

As the weight of Isabel's absence hung heavy in the air, Maya's mind drifted back to the memories she shared with Andrew somehow, her heart heavy with a mix of longing and regret. Amidst the turmoil, flashes of moments flooded her mind—little gestures, fleeting glances, and whispered words that spoke volumes of Andrew's love for her.

She remembered the time Andrew stayed up all night to help her with her project, him being the unwavering support and a beacon of strength in her darkest moments. And the way he'd surprise her with her favorite snack just to see her smile, his affectionate gestures warming her heart on even the coldest of days.

memories of all kinds danced before her eyes, she couldn't help but wonder if she had missed the signs of Andrew's love all along.  
His efforts, his affection—it was all there, waiting to be recognized and cherished

As she reminisced about the good times, her mind inevitably drifted back to a darker chapter of her past. She found herself reliving a harrowing moment from her childhood, seated in the back of her parents' car. In a fit of childish impatience, she had thrown a tantrum, her father's attempts to calm her down, led the car veer off course, drifting and crashing into a nearby pond.

The icy embrace of the water enveloped them, swallowing the car whole as it sank beneath the surface. In those terrifying moments, Maya's world had turned upside down, her cries for help drowned out by the rush of water.

Thankfully, her parents reacted swiftly, pushing her out from the sinking vehicle,

their arms became the lifeline in the darkness for Maya.

Though physically unharmed, Maya couldn't shake the lingering sense of dread that had gripped her in those fleeting moments of chaos.

In the aftermath of the accident, Maya found herself plagued by guilt, haunted by the belief that her actions had led to the situation they had faced. She carried the weight of that guilt like a heavy burden, unable to shake the feeling that she had failed to be the light her parents needed in their darkest hour.

As Joshua stood in the room, he too felt a wave of emotions sweep over him, emanating from Maya. It was as if her memories, her emotions, were flowing through the very air, touching him deeply. In that moment, he sensed Maya's love for Andrew and the horrors she had gone through in life.

A heavy silence settled in the room, thick with the weight of Maya's emotions. Each heartbeat seemed to echo in the stillness.

As the memories of my past flooded my being, a surge of energy coursed through me, illuminating my form with a celestial glow. In that radiant light, I materialized as a Crystal projection upon Maya's trembling frame—a ghostly apparition of my former self, Isabelle.

And as I gazed into Joshua's eyes, my heart was heavy with the burden of the confession I had to make..

Joshua stood in awe, his eyes welling up with tears as he beheld the crystal projection of Isabelle, his beloved. With trembling hands, he reached out to embrace her, longing to feel the warmth of her presence once more. But as his arms closed around the empty air, reality came crashing down upon him. Isabelle was just a mere projection, a ghostly reminder of the love he had lost.

Tears streamed down Joshua's cheeks as he held onto the fleeting image, his heart heavy with the weight of his grief. He yearned to hold her close, to feel her heartbeat against his chest, but she remained out of his reach.

I knew that I had to speak the truth. "I am not truly here my love," I whispered, my voice trembling with emotion. "I am but a memory, a fragment of Isabelle's essence trapped in the echoes of time."

In that moment of profound sadness, Joshua whispered words of love and longing, his voice choked with emotion. "I miss you, Isabelle," he murmured, his words a desperate plea to the universe. "I wish you were here with me, in the flesh, not just a memory."

The words hung heavy in the air, a somber reminder of the fragile nature of our existence. Maya's tears continued to fall, her sobs echoing through the room as she grappled with the weight of my revelation. Joshua's expression softened with understanding, his eyes filled with a mixture of sadness and acceptance.

As they all were tearing up , with the acceptance of her task complete Isabelle now slowly started releasing her control over maya and the shimmer surrounding Isabel intensified, unfolding into a kaleidoscope of glowing particles made of energy that seemed to dissolve her crystalline form bit by bit. Yet her expression stayed perfectly serene, almost joyful , the same as the first time Joshua had gazed upon her in the corridors and lectures of Cambridge back in the 16th century.

Isabel's ethereal hand caressed Maya's cheek with a loving warmth that transcended her spirit's departure.

"Isabel... she's gone, Joshua , I've lost her presence."Maya's voice trembled with emotion as she spoke.

"I can't feel her presence at all . It's like a part of my soul has been ripped away." maya with tears on her cheeks declared.

Joshua nodded sadly. "It's okay, sweet maya. I guess this is how it was meant to end. Isabel had the courage , to break free from our immortal struggles , she was brave back then , she was brave at the moment too."

"Now, children," Joshua's voice trembled with emotion as he addressed them, "it's almost time for me to ascend as well.

Isabelle may be waiting for me wherever I go , if the heavens accept us. I'm grateful for the time we've shared, for each and every one of you. You were the reason I could meet Isabelle for one last time in this mortal world, and that means more to me than words can express."

Maya's eyes glistened with unshed tears as she listened to Joshua's heartfelt words.  
"We'll miss you, Joshua," she whispered, her voice barely above a whisper.

Jasmin and Sam nodded in silent agreement, their own emotions too raw for words.

"And please, look after Andrew for me," Joshua continued, his gaze lingering on Maya.  
"He's a special boy, and I trust you to take care of him as if he were your own."

Meanwhile, in Andrew's mind, Joshua's voice echoed softly, bidding farewell to his host.  
"Thank you for everything, Andrew," he said, his words infused with warmth and affection of a hug. "You were a true friend, and I'll never forget you."

the particles began to float above Andrew, a bittersweet symphony of light and hope, Joshua whispered a final farewell to his friends. And as he ascended towards the heavens, his heart swelled with gratitude for the love and companionship they had shared.

The first rays of dawn began to break across the horizon as the centuries old wish broke its cycle.

# shards

of him , her & me

# **Chapter 5 -**

DAWN OF LOVE

With Joshua gone, it's my turn to take the reins as the writer, to tell the rest of the story.

So, let's get this story going...

As the first light of dawn painted the sky in hues of pink and gold,

Andrew gradually returned to his usual self, aided by Maya and the others who tended to him with care. Memories trickled back, like fragments of a dream.

As Joshua felt Maya's memories Andrew too felt the same as he was the host, revealing her pain, love and insecurities to him, a sense of urgency was going on in Andrew's mind as there were some important words he needed to convey to Maya.

With Maya standing before him, her gaze filled with concern and compassion, Andrew's heart swelled with emotions and love.  
Drawing a deep breath, he found his voice, his words full of sincerity.

"I remember now, Maya," Andrew began, his eyes locking with hers. "There's something I need to say to you."

Maya's brow furrowed slightly, a mix of anticipation and apprehension flickering across her features as she awaited his words.

"In the darkness, I promise to be your light, I promise to be the hand that grabs you from the dark," Andrew continued, his voice soft yet resolute. "I'll stand by you, always."

As the weight of his words settled between them, Maya felt tears prickling at the corners of her eyes. The depth of Andrew's words touched her soul in ways she couldn't fully express.

Without a word, Maya stepped forward and enveloped Andrew in a warm embrace, her heart overflowing with gratitude and affection.

Jasmin, witnessing the tender moment between her friends, felt tears welling up in her own eyes.

She understood the significance of Andrew's promise and the solace it offered Maya in her moments of darkness.

Meanwhile, Sam, ever the documentarian of their lives, seized the opportunity to capture the poignant scene. With his phone, he practically immortalized the embrace, ensuring the memory would endure long after the dawn had faded.

In that moment, they silently prayed for Joshua and Isabel, two souls lost to the ravages of time and circumstance. They yearned for the heavens to grant them peace and the chance to reunite in a realm beyond mortal reach.

As the morning light bathed them in its gentle glow, Maya and Andrew found themselves drawn closer together, their bond strengthened by the trials they had faced and the promises they had exchanged.

And now you know why the title says  
" Shards of him , her and me "

Well if you are still curious about jacob the nice guy , which you shouldn't be by the way ( spoiler warning ) I'll reveal what actually happened there ' as Maya ended the call jacob continued his date with the girl who he was going out with wait for it... Wait for it... Yea it's Emily the girl he gave the soda to ' he tried his luck everywhere I guess on the same day , not a good look though , there you go now that's wrapped up too.

THE END.

A sincere attempt to write a short story series by aman anu.

( Well inform me if you find the easter eggs and also the references to the previous chapters )