The last train to Medra screeched to a halt as it stopped at the station. I grabbed my stuff and took a deep breath before stepping onto the platform. The air was cleaner with the smell of hot tea, metal, and the chaos of people hustling. People pushed each other like swarms of jellyfish squeezing themselves into the hole. One can never be fit enough, unless you can swim in a sea of humans. Everything about Medra was different. Well, maybe it wasn’t, but I had expected it to be.

I reached for my phone and called Ansh, the one I had come all this way to visit. He didn’t pick up. Probably busy. I texted him “*bey kidhar hai tu, aa raha ki mai cab book karu?*”

I checked my watch—10 PM. Should I book a cab? It’s too late. Bustling noise started to reduce. My train was the last one for the day. Shops started packing up. My phone vibrated—he called!

“*aa gayi theek se?* *cab bilkul mat krna. mai bs ek ghante mai aya”.* He lived far from the station, in a sleek dorm room. He had mid-sems in two days, the worst time of the semester. I didn’t wanna bother him to pick me up. But I had to come over since my mid-sems were over.

I sat on a cold metal bench, feeling the coolness of the night breeze mixed with the distant horns of passing trains thundering down the tracks. Something about locomotives is so sexy. My obessions are so weird, I wonder why Ansh likes me. Lost in my thoughts, I felt a small smile tug at my lips. The cool air kissed my face as I fell asleep.

“*madam, kisi ka wait kar rahe ho?*”*,* someone tapped on my shoulder; I realized I had dozed off. I quickly sat straight, fixing my hair. “*haan, mera dost bas ane wala hai*”, I replied, my voice still groggy from sleep. The station was nearly empty. The once-bustling platform now eerily quiet. The firm man who woke me up introduced himself as the station master, “*kaha se aye ho aap?”. “Ahmedabad*," I answered. Then, realizing I had no idea how long I had been asleep,"*waise, kitne baje hai?”* asks a stupid who’s already wearing a watch. He laughingly said, "*11:20. Lagta hai aap ghode bech ke sone walon mai se ho*". I felt offended and said “*mai ghode aur gadhe, dono ko bech ke soti hu*”. What a lame joke I cracked. His smile seemed practiced. I started checking my phone to break the awkward conversation. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a canned energy drink. "*Ye lo. wapas mat so jana*”, he laughingly headed off back to his cabin. The cold can freezed my hands. I was craving hot chai since I stepped off the train. But I guess this works too. I popped of the tab and drank it.

11:30, Ansh called, “*tu exactly kidhar hai?”.* I got up to check for landmarks “*I was near the samosa wala shop. Par dukan band hai toh...”*

*“station number bol”*

*“L2. Ruk 2 minute.”*

*“ok mai gaadi park karke aya”*

There was nobody around. I went to the station master’s cabin. He was sitting there with other officals. “*bhaiya yeh station number konsa hai?”*

*“L2”*

*“L2. Medra na?”*

*“Ji. Mai baat karu apke dost se? Unko idea aega”*

I hand over the phone to him. He stood up from his chair and gave landmarks to Ansh

“Ji. L2, water tank side se 3rd section”.

There was a pause, his brows wrinkled “pure station pe water tank hi nahi? end pe hoga. dikha?”

“kya baat hai bhaisaab. aap Medra station hi aye hona?”

The station-master paused, his fingers drumming on the desk.

“Kya! Nandol. Aapki dost to kabse Medra pe hai.”

“Gaadi Nandol tak thi, last stop”

“Ji. Ji. Madam ko bolo thoda dhyan rakhe. Hum bhijwa denge”

“Ji aap rukiye, mai unko lekar ata hu”

A strong wave of adrenaline whooshed my gut. Without thinking I said “kya hua? mila usko?”. He cut the call and turned towards me dissapointed, “aap ek station agge nikal gaye. Apka dost Nandol ke L2 mai hai.”

My eyes blanked out for a few seconds on hearing this. “madam aapko pata haina ki woh last train thi aaj ki? Batao-”

My feet started getting heavier. How could this happen? What a rookie move. Again-

“Maine baat kar li hai unse. Hamare offical ki car se chhod denge”, he said, digging out the car keys from the drawer.”

My mind storming. How could this happen. I called Ansh, “mai bs ayi”.

“jaldi jaldi mai samaan mat bhool jana”, he laughingly said.

“haan. theek haina”

“I’m waitng”

I gave a shaky laugh and cut the call. I quickly packed up my belongings and followed the station-master. God cannot keep on saving me. I have to stop being an easy cookie.

The station master helped me put all the luggage in the trunk. I got inside the car. “pass mai hi hai. Tension mat lo madam, hota hai kabhi kabhi”.

That didn’t help at all. Ansh must be thinking how stupid I am.