

## Chapter 1: The Boy from the Small Lane

In the small town of Alapur, where the sky turned orange every evening, lived a boy named **Aarav**. He was poor — not just in money but in opportunities. His father had died when he was twelve, and his mother worked as a maid in rich houses. Aarav used to help her after school, cleaning gardens, washing cars, or sometimes delivering groceries to earn a few coins.

Despite everything, Aarav was not bitter. He was kind, humble, and full of dreams. He always said to his mother,

"One day, Maa, I'll make you live in a big house, and you won't have to work anymore."

His mother smiled but deep down, she knew how hard that dream was.

## Chapter 2: The Girl from the Mansion

On the other side of the same town lived **Riya Malhotra** — the only daughter of Mr. Rajesh Malhotra, one of the richest businessmen in Alapur. She had everything money could buy: cars, clothes, luxury. But what she didn't have was *peace*.

Her parents were always busy, arguing about business, meetings, or parties. She often sat alone in her big balcony, watching the sunset that looked the same for everyone — rich or poor.

One day, when Riya's car broke down near the market, she stepped out, annoyed. And that's when she saw Aarav — a boy repairing a cycle at a small shop, with grease on his hands and a soft smile on his face.

"Excuse me," she said, "can you check what's wrong with my car? My driver isn't here yet."

Aarav looked nervous. "Ma'am, I don't repair cars, I only fix bicycles..."

But seeing her worried face, he quickly helped her call a mechanic and even stood with her until the car was fixed.

That day, Riya saw something rare — a kindness that didn't want anything in return.

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## Chapter 3: The Beginning of Something New

After that day, Riya couldn't forget Aarav's simplicity. She started visiting that market more often, pretending to buy small things just to see him. Sometimes she would talk to him — about the weather, about books, about life.

At first, Aarav kept his distance. He respected her but knew she belonged to a different world. Yet, slowly, he started looking forward to those moments too.

One day, she brought him tea from a nearby stall and sat beside him on the bench.

"Do you ever dream, Aarav?" she asked.

He laughed softly. "Dreams? I can't afford those, Riya. I just work to survive."

She looked at him, her eyes sad. "You know what's funny? I have everything, but I feel like I have nothing."

That day, for the first time, Aarav realized that even rich people could be lonely.

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## **Chapter 4: When Hearts Forget Their Place**

Days turned into weeks. They began to meet regularly — sometimes at the market, sometimes at the lake behind the temple.

Riya told Aarav about her world — the parties, the fake smiles, the emptiness. Aarav told her about his mother, his struggles, and his wish to study engineering one day.

Slowly, without planning it, they fell in love.

One rainy evening, as they stood under a small roof, drenched and laughing, Riya held his hand and said softly,

“Aarav, I don’t care what people think. I love you.”

Aarav froze.

He loved her too — every word she said, every smile she gave.

But he looked at their hands and then pulled away.

“Riya,” he whispered, “this can’t happen. You are from a world where everything shines. I belong to darkness. Your father will never accept me.”

Tears filled her eyes. “Then I’ll leave that world, Aarav. I’ll come to yours.”

He shook his head. “No. You deserve better.”

That night, Riya cried herself to sleep, and Aarav sat awake, staring at the sky, fighting between love and fear.

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## **Chapter 5: The War Between Love and Pride**

For days, Riya tried to convince Aarav, but he avoided her.

He started working longer hours, trying to bury his feelings under work. But love is stubborn — it doesn’t listen to logic.

One evening, Riya went to his small house. Aarav was shocked to see her standing in front of his broken wooden door.

“Aarav, I told my father about us,” she said, her voice trembling.

He turned pale. “What did he say?”

Riya’s eyes filled with tears. “He was furious. He said you’re after money, that you’ll ruin my life.”

Aarav clenched his fists. “He’s right, Riya. I’m poor. I have nothing to give you.”

Riya grabbed his hand. “You have a heart, Aarav. That’s everything I ever wanted.”

His eyes softened, but before he could speak, his mother came out, coughing weakly.

Riya rushed to help her, and in that moment, Aarav saw something — a rich girl kneeling on a dusty floor, giving water to his sick mother.

That night, something changed inside him.

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## **Chapter 6: Love Wins (Almost)**

Aarav stopped running from his feelings.

He decided to meet Riya the next day at the lake — their favorite place.

When she saw him walking toward her, she smiled for the first time in weeks.

He came close and said softly, “Riya, I tried to stay away. I thought love wasn’t enough... but I was wrong. You were right. Love is everything.”

She cried and hugged him. “I told you, Aarav, one day you’d understand.”

For the next few months, they lived in their own small world — simple, happy, and pure.

Riya even started helping Aarav’s mother and teaching poor kids in his area.

Her father stopped speaking to her, but she didn’t care. She said,

“I don’t need a palace if my heart already found home.”

Aarav began studying again, working hard to pass an exam for a scholarship. He wanted to build a better future — for both of them.

It seemed like everything was finally falling into place.

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## **Chapter 7: The Silent Storm**

But life has a strange way of testing love.

One day, Riya fainted while teaching children at Aarav’s home. At first, they thought it was just weakness, but when it happened again, Aarav took her to the hospital.

The doctor’s face turned serious after some tests.

He called Aarav inside and said quietly,

“She has leukemia... blood cancer. It’s in the last stage.”

Aarav’s world shattered. He couldn’t breathe.

When he went inside, Riya was smiling, unaware of the truth.

He couldn’t tell her that her days were numbered. He just sat beside her, holding her hand, pretending everything was normal.

That night, he cried silently, praying for a miracle.

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## **Chapter 8: When Time Runs Out**

As weeks passed, Riya became weaker. She noticed Aarav’s sadness and finally confronted him.

“Aarav, what’s wrong? You’ve been crying at night. Tell me the truth.”

He broke down. “Riya... the doctor said... you don’t have much time left.”

For a moment, she went silent. Then, she smiled gently.

"I already knew something was wrong. I could feel it."

Tears streamed down Aarav's face. "No, Riya, please don't say that. I'll find a way. I'll sell everything. I'll do anything to save you."

She touched his cheek and whispered,

"You've already given me more than I ever dreamed of — real love. Don't cry, Aarav. Even if I go, I'll always be with you."

Every evening, Aarav took her to the lake, where they had first confessed their love.

They sat together, watching the sunset — the same orange sky that once connected their worlds.

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### **Chapter 9: The Final Goodbye**

One night, Riya asked Aarav to take her to the old bench near the market where they first met. He carried her in his arms — she was too weak to walk.

As they sat there, she said softly,

"Do you remember that day? You said you couldn't afford dreams. But you gave me one — a life where love mattered more than money."

Aarav couldn't speak. He just held her hand tightly.

"Promise me," she whispered, "you'll keep living. You'll make your dreams real. And when you see the sunset, think of me."

He nodded, tears falling like rain. "I promise, Riya."

She smiled faintly. "Then I can rest now."

Her eyes slowly closed, and her hand slipped from his.

The night grew silent — too silent.

Aarav sat there for hours, holding her lifeless body, feeling his heart break into pieces.

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### **Chapter 10: After She Was Gone**

Riya's father came the next day, broken and full of regret.

He realized too late that love could not be measured in money.

Aarav lit Riya's pyre with trembling hands. As the flames rose, he whispered,

"You wanted me to live, Riya. I will. But a part of me will always burn with you."

Months passed. Aarav got the scholarship he once dreamed of. He worked hard, built his career, and opened a free school for poor children — in Riya's name.

He called it "**Riya's Light.**"

Every evening, after the children left, he sat by the window, watching the same orange sunset.

Sometimes he smiled, sometimes he cried. But every time the wind blew softly, he could almost hear her voice saying,

“I’m still here, Aarav. In every sunset. In every dream.”

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## **Epilogue**

Years later, people often asked Aarav why he never married.

He just smiled and said,

“I already found my forever — she just went ahead of me.”

On his desk was an old photo of Riya, smiling in the sunlight, with a flower in her hair.

And next to it — a small note she had written before she died:

“Love doesn’t need wealth. It just needs truth.”

Aarav read that note every day before going to sleep.

His life was simple again, but this time, he wasn’t poor.

Because somewhere, in every heartbeat, Riya still lived — not as a memory, but as a part of his soul.

And that’s how a poor boy and a rich girl proved that love can cross every wall... except fate.

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 “A Love Beyond Riches” — The End