Worthy Expectations

It didn’t mattered how the evening was. It didn’t mattered how delighted I was to find the perfect bouquet. Ankita was pestering me about the zone out that had occurred just outside the restaurant.

I couldn’t tell her that wasn’t zoning out or daydreaming. The scene in front of me was enough to shatter me from inside.

“We could’ve gotten better seats.

Look the one by the window.”

Ankita was pointing towards a vacant table near the window. I had forced her to sit here because I wanted to hear them and this was the nearest seats. Though my face was not facing them but my ears were attentive towards every word.

She was crying. After prying for so much time, still she was the one who was crying. The blood was boiling inside my heart. How could she cry even after knowing what she was doing?

“Hey we’ve been here for 20 minutes now.

Wouldn’t you order something?”

I snapped out of my confusion and saw the nearby seats were vacant. Through the window I saw her board a cab. I couldn’t wait now. It’ll be too late if I wait any longer.

“I have to go now.” I said while picking my jacket offs the chair.

“Sorry, but we have to do this sometime later.”

“But this is our first time seeing each other.”

But I was already off. I didn’t even turned to say goodbye. I knew I’ll regret it later but I have to know the truth for myself.

30min later.

The reply of the message was quick. Although I thought that she would reject and I would have to force her to face me. But she said she was free and even invited me for tea.

I arrived at her doors. Her footsteps were clear. She opens the gates to her flat and invites me in.

“Come in.

I had just finished my work.”

The make up on her front cheeks were a clearly to hide the fact that she was crying. Her hair was still the same as they were in the restaurant. In a ponytail and loose.

“Sit on the couch.

Pick a movie.

There were so many I couldn’t even decide where to start.”

“The tea will be ready in a minute.”

“I’d prefer the table.” I said to her.

“Okay suit yourself.”

“Any word from auntie.

How is she?

You know she harassed me a lot when you arrived in Delhi, few months back.”

‘*Oh, Please take care of Akyshansh, Garima.*

*He is like your little brother.*

*He hasn’t lived alone in his life.*

*We are all depended on you.*

*Help him when he is in trouble*.’”

She was now putting chai in the cups.

She still knew that I don’t take any sugar in my tea.

“If you only weren’t in the same neighborhood as I was.

Heh…..but what can we do over spilled milk.

So, How is the first job going?” She asked while handing me my cup.She was a joyous person on the whole but today looked like she had hit herself with an adrenaline shot.

“Take the cup already.”

“Garima, How long has it been going for?” My eyes were looking into the depths of hers blue ones.

“Huh….about 5 minutes on low heat.”

“I mean your affair with that man.”

“Aaaaaah”

She had just dropped the cup on my pants. The sensation was like my skin would peel off right now.

“Sorr..Sorrry

I’m really sorry.” She ran in a hurry towards the fridge and brought some ice wrapped in a towel.

“I didn’t know what happened.

I just lost my grip.”

The sensation was like hot iron has just rolled over my thigh. Thank god it wasn’t just a little up or my entire manhood would’ve been in question.

But that thought didn’t make the burning sensation go away. I immediately took my pants off. This must be the first time that I was in my shorts alone with a girl and wasn’t feeling aroused.

“Fuck..”

“Sorry again. Wait, a sec I’ll grab one of my pajamas. ” She said.

“Don’t worry about it.” Fuck. What don’t worry? IF the aim was just a little off. Who knows what would’ve happened.

After some time when the sensation went down, we again sat down. I had wrapped a long towel around my waist. The was to talk but this time without the tea( Or any drink for that matters.).

“Tell me who was he?”

“Just a friend from work.” She fidgeted with her loose hairs. Her eyes mapping the marbled floors , the lips trembling to speak.

“Friends don’t kiss each other.”

“I saw you, Garima! Snogging him like he was stuck to your lips.

I was in the same restaurant. Sitting behind you.”

She averted her gaze.

“You should go now.” She said

“I won’t . And even if I could, I can’t.” Though the pain was almost gone the excuse was enough to tie my spot to her place.

“I should bring something for that.” She said.

“GARIMA!

Why are you trying to change the subject?

We went to the same school. Played together. You told me about your addiction even before uncle found out. So why hide it now? We have shared even the secrets of secrets.

Then Why?”

Garima stood there like a pillar. Slight sobbing was clearly hearable. She hid her face behind her long coal hairs.

“You are engaged. The wedding is in 3 months.

And……..” Biting my lips I said.

“Please tell me what’s going on.” I took an empty gulp calming down.

“Who is he?

And if you like him so much then why don’t just tell uncle about him.”

“I …… I can’t.” She said

“Why?” She stood there silent, holding her hands in one another. She was not even trying to fake it. This was serious.

“Tell me dammit. WHY?”

“BECAUSE HE IS MARRIED………………

You’re happy now.” She said. Her voice was blubbering with every word.

But the biggest shock was for me. The girl I always admired. The girl I always thought, had everything figured out, everything planned out. She was the same girl who had planned her whole life to a T even before entering the second year of her college, she can’t make a mistake like that. That’s what I liked about her. Her passion. Her sense of independence. Her extreme attitude with a hint of modesty. Being the eldest woman in the family after her mother’s passing, she always showed a maturity even the rest of the girls senior to her won’t.

In my time at the school, I saw many boys proposed to her but she refused them all. In fact she rarely had any friends. The only person she spent the most time in school was with me. And that was because we were in the same neighborhood. But being in different classes meant that we had to meet in the recess. I always looked forward for that 30 minutes, the time in every single day when I will get to be with her. In fact the sole reason I eagerly went to school every morning was because she was the one who dropped me off. She often came by to check up on me. Gave me her notes from the time when she was in the same class. Helped me study for exam. She was indeed by truest friend. My best friend.

When she graduated from the school, my heart shattered. Her last goodbye as she went to another state for college was one of the most painful yet beautiful memories I ever had.

After that, after all these years, this was the first time I met her, when I came to this new city. She was the only one I knew, and yet again she humbly helped me to settle down. Helped me cope with my new and unfamiliar life. She hasn’t changed (Or so I thought at that time.). She has grown into a beauty in all these years. My heart acted like an uncontrollable horse when I first saw her. I knew that it was just testosterone in me, pumping all around. After all she has been the most influential girl in my life. And after so many years away, I can’t describe what I felt when she first opened that door to me. Her smile, her ever so slightly tilted head when she greeted me with her deep blue eyes seemed to warm my face red in a gush.

But it was all too late. The day I decided to move, I got to know about her engagement and wedding, my heart ached for some reason. It must be a happy ache like the tears of joy. Of course I was happy for her. Yet Every time the thought of her in rose red bridal dress came to mind, it felt like someone poked a needle somewhere in me.

Once in a while when I brought the talk of her wedding, she would just get up and walk away. Till this time I thought that was because of shyness but now I knew a little better….

………………………………..

She was crying in the lobby sitting on the couch. Her head hiding in her hair and knees. Sobbing sound echoed in the air. I knew that it wasn’t the right time to ask but if I don’t, three lives could be destroyed.

“Why are you doing this, Garima?” My hands gently scrubbed her head.

“You are cheating two men of their future. You are cheating yourself.

I expected better from you.

How can a responsible adult like you do this?”

“You can’t understand the world of the adults. You have just begun your journey.

What do you know about what we go through? What we have to deal with?”

“Then tell me……”

“Even if I do you wouldn’t understand.”

“Then help me.”

She was still in her primordial pose. Neglecting to even look at me.

“GARIMA!” I shouted at her. But she wasn’t budging from her spot a bit. This one sided conversation was leading nowhere. A struggle built up in me.

I think I heard one of my nerves popping. I threw the Ice bag at her, it hit her head but she didn’t respond at all. There was only one way to resolve this now.

I got up and held her hands. Pushing her down on the couch as her sore and ruined make up face came into light. Her eyes were like a deep lake. My silhouette in them felt like I was the one drowning in them. My heart skipped a pace when I saw her lips, all this time she had been biting them under her teeth. They have swollen a little and turned into a color of cherry. Her scent reminded me a little of berries.

For the first time her face looked like someone would kiss and love. The thoughts kept coming like waves on a shore. I can’t stop them like the heart that was beating like a drum. As my chest touched hers I felt her heart too. It’s beat, It’s agitation.

She closed her eyes. Both of our breathing were varied and I was pretty sure that adrenaline was pumping all over my body as every moment felt slower. What was the meaning of this? Did she just refuse to resist? Does she want me to proceed? Her hands gripped mine. Fingers in fingers. Her worried face from a moment ago was washed away into nothingness. My mind was like a blank sheet but I couldn’t write any thoughts or words on it. As I grabbed her lips with mine softly at first, her arms grabbed me back. The intensity increased swiftly, She was just not responding she was kissing back. Her hands caroused my hair as my shivering hands grabbed her neck. The insistent kissing went beyond the realm of gentleness. The strong lips sent wild tremors through my spine went into my body. I was getting dizzy and the vision was blurred.

That’s when I realized, she with her spiky nail hands was unbuttoning my shirt.

“No, we can’t do that.” I said, backing off.

I increased my distance from her. Knowing that we have already ruined the pure relation we had. But going any further will make it unrecoverable.

“But this is what you wanted, right?”

“What are you saying, Garima?

We should stop it.

It was a mistake. A huge one.”

“But that’s what you wanted, to be an adult. To know what it feels like.” She said while leaning up on me and continuing what she was doing.

“GARIMA!” I pushed her back. She landed with her bottom. Her wyes wide, her face red. My loud voice seemed to have woken her up from her trance.

“Hmmm….Now you know what it feels like.

Now you got the answer to your question.

Welcome to the responsible life of an adult.” She said

“I didn’t mean to….” I whispered, lacking the courage to say it out loud or maybe because it was a lie.

“I’m---”

“You should go.” She was cross armed, turned away from me.

“But let me explain”

“Before any worse happens.” She said swiftly.

Before I could explain, she had already opened the door. There was nothing left to be said.

I took my jacket, pants and went to her.

“I hope everything will be alright again.” I said.

“Don’t waste your breath.” Her cold reply

As the sound of the door slamming behind me pierced my ears. Another thought pierced my heart. I had realized not long ago, the reason my heart ached from the thought of her marriage. From the thought of her being with another man.

Huh….I Loved Her.

Man, I loved her. How did I not realize it sooner? In school, In her tuitions, In the months I have been here. All this time this feeling was here, right in there but I just name it friendship. As a brotherly love, when it was something more.

Her sobbing was heard from outside. The thudding sound just after the shutting of door must be due to her falling on the floor.

I wanted to hug her. To pick her up and wipe those tears away but I knew I caused them. I would only enhance their numbers. So I just left.

Hoping that there will be a tomorrow where I will talk to her.