

IN THE REALM OF LOVE, EVEN THE
ORDINARY BECOMES EXTRAORDINARY.

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First edition.

Dedicated to you,

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Preface



People write love stories, and people write autobiographies. People write autobiographies that revolve around love stories. And more often than not, these love stories are picture-perfect: a girl meets a boy, the boy eyes the girl, the girl looks at her friends for approval and gets it, the girl reciprocates, there are silent sighs and sleepless nights, the first kiss happens, followed by a few more sleepless nights, and they go against the world, and everything falls into place.

Boring. I mean, wouldn't you rather be lying in the arms of your loving boyfriend or girlfriend than reading this book on a Friday night, curled up in your bed with no one to cuddle but your pillow? But the fact is that you are here, and in all probability, you know that finding true love is as difficult as finding a needle in a haystack. But then again, love wouldn't be such a huge concept, and Valentine's Day would just be another day if love was something you could find walking on the subway or over the counter.

Love is not something you can receive by email whenever you need it; it is tough to find love. Anyway, as we go about finding true love, we all experience turbulence, speed bumps,

ugly turns, tears, tons of ice cream, assholes, bitches... but do we stop? We do not. We fall in love, hoping that things will turn out just fine, and more often than not, they do not. However, if they do, it makes for a great love story. What if they do or do not? This book is about when it almost doesn't. And some other unrelated things. Is this my story? No. But it's the story of someone I know, in his own words. He always believes that love is waiting right around the corner! It will come when it comes; the possibilities are endless.

Way Back into Love



I am Harsh, an average-looking boy, navigating through the trials and tribulations of school life. Vartika, on the other hand, is a radiant presence, captivating hearts effortlessly with her charm and grace. It all began in the fourth grade when our paths first crossed, but it took eight long years for our friendship to blossom.

I remember the day as if it were yesterday. I was making my way to the staff room when I saw her accompanied by her parents, seeking admission to our college. It was the first time our eyes met, and I was instantly captivated by her ethereal beauty. I spent the entire evening desperately trying not to stare into those “fall-in-love-with-me” eyes. Her features were exquisite, and I found myself drawn to every aspect of her being. I wanted to say, “I like your nose, can I touch it?” I wanted to say, “I like your lips, are they for real?” I wanted to say, “I like your eyes, can I stare into them forever?” I truly haven’t seen someone who is so perfect in her existence that you feel worthless and depressed. The simplicity of what she

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was wearing, the honesty in her smile, the serenading voice, the depth of her eyes—unforgettable.

“Ek ladki ko dekha to aisa laga, jaise khilta gulab, jaise shayar ka khwab, jaise ujali kiran, jaise wan mein hiran, jaise chandni raat, jaise narmi ki baat, jaise mandir main ho ek jalta diya...”

Days turned into nights, and four days had passed since our encounter. Still, she consumed my thoughts, her presence lingering within me like a spell. That smile, those eyes—they refused to fade from my mind. It was as if a deeper connection existed between us, defying all rational explanations. It was a matter of the heart, an inexplicable bond that defied logic. As I drifted off to sleep each night, my deepest wish was to see her again, to have the opportunity to delve further into the mystery that surrounded her.

And then, like a twist of fate, I discovered that she was in the same class as me, but in a different section. Although our paths crossed countless times during the college prayer sessions, we had never exchanged a single word. It seemed as if the universe was conspiring to keep us apart, testing the strength of our connection.

However, destiny had other plans in store for us. Three years later, a debate competition was organized within the college, and by a stroke of luck, we found ourselves on the same team. Our teacher introduced us, and Vartika finally became aware of my existence. It was a turning point, a spark that ignited the flame of friendship between us. Together, we triumphed in the debate, our shared victory marking the beginning of a profound bond.

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From that day forward, our encounters became more frequent. Who knows if love is creation's conspiracy! Whenever we spotted each other in the prayer grounds, we would exchange greetings, a simple hello or a warm smile that spoke volumes. It was the beginning of a beautiful connection, a friendship that held the promise of something deeper, something extraordinary. Little did I know that the journey we were embarking upon would be filled with twists and turns, testing our courage, resilience, and the depth of our emotions. But for now, in the early stages of our friendship, we reveled in the simple joy of each other's presence, cherishing the moments we shared and eagerly anticipating what the future had in store for us.

Time flowed like a river, carrying us along its currents, but fate had other plans in store for us. In tenth grade, our lives took a sharp turn as circumstances forced Vartika to change college. We were abruptly separated, and I never had the chance to bid her a proper farewell, to hold onto that precious connection that had brought light to my world. It felt as though a void had been carved into the fabric of my existence, and I wondered if I would ever have the opportunity to see her again.

Years passed, and life moved forward, leaving behind memories that lingered like fragments of a forgotten dream. One day, while sifting through the carefully preserved albums of past prize distribution ceremonies, my gaze fell upon the only picture I had with Vartika. I couldn't help but feel a mixture of pride and nostalgia as I shared with anyone who would listen that she was the girl who had transformed my mundane life into something extraordinary, simply by her presence. Her very existence had the power to quicken the beat of my heart, to ignite a fire within me whenever our paths crossed in the school

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corridors. In those early days, the smallest details about her captivated me. Discovering her favorite food, for instance, led me to bring it to school in my lunch almost every day, starting from the very next day. Looking back, I realize how foolish it may have seemed, but there was a genuine innocence and love behind those actions, painted with a sparkle of affection.

We often question the hand of destiny, blaming it for denying us the chance at love. But perhaps the real question lies within ourselves—did we give ourselves the opportunity for love? As time slipped by, two years elapsed since Vartika's departure, and I found myself moving on to university. It was there, amidst the new surroundings and experiences, that I began to truly comprehend the peculiarities of my past infatuation.

In the university setting, I couldn't help but reflect on the absurdity of my actions during those school days—going to school with the sole purpose of catching a mere glimpse of her face, while receiving no attention in return. It dawned on me that crushes, more often than not, tend to be unattainable dreams, distant fantasies that stir our hearts but rarely find fruition. And Vartika, with her status as the school's top achiever, was a symbol of unattainability, a beacon of excellence that made it all the more natural for my heart to gravitate towards her. Many of my friends had confessed their feelings for her, yet I guarded mine securely within the chambers of my heart. In the realms of school life, where immaturity reigns and perspectives vary, crushes can often become regrets. But not for me.

Despite the circumstances, a smile would invariably grace my face whenever Vartika's name surfaced in my thoughts or when a notification on my phone signaled her presence. I had never mustered the courage to confess my love, but loving her silently

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brought me immense pleasure. It was a secret I treasured, a hidden gem that illuminated my soul. I wished for nothing but the best for her, for she had been one of the catalysts that made my school life truly awesome, coloring it with moments of joy and wonder.

A Surprise Encounter



One day, as I sat in the college canteen scrolling through Instagram, I stumbled upon someone's profile—a familiar face that had haunted my thoughts for the past two years. It felt like a miracle, a chance encounter that took me by surprise. Love had found me when I least expected it, as if I had struck a jackpot. The timing seemed perfect, and I hesitated at first, unsure if I should send her a message or a friend request on Instagram. But her profile picture urged me forward, and with a sense of rightness, I took the leap.

Just as I was contemplating my next move, my childhood friend Shreyansh appeared beside me in the canteen. We had been together throughout school and were now attending the same university. Our bond was unbreakable, forged over twelve years of friendship. Some people even mistook us for twins. Shreyansh playfully snatched my phone and noticed my excitement. With a mischievous smile, he sent the friend request on my behalf. Soon after, a notification popped up: "Vartika accepted your friend request." I couldn't help but jump

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with joy.

From that moment on, I found myself diving into her pictures, each one revealing a different side of her. There was one where she wore a saree and jhumka, another where she adorned a light pink lehanga at her sister's wedding. I became lost in those snapshots, forgetting that I had also mindlessly liked every single one of them. After a few minutes, a message from her appeared: "Bas bas aaram se, btw Thank you." I wanted to reply immediately but I controlled myself. In the following days, she shared a selfie on her Instagram story, and I couldn't help but respond with a compliment, "You look awfully pretty." She swiftly replied, "What a compliment, terrible welcome." It seemed she had also taken an interest in talking, possibly after checking out my profile, as she responded to one of my highlight stories with, "You still smile like the same 6th-class boy."

Our daily conversations began to flourish, and before I knew it, we had become good friends. We shared every little detail with each other, from her first-time experience of riding a scooty to amusing encounters with cranky uncles on bicycles. Our connection grew deeper, and it felt like we had become more than just good friends. We tagged each other in memes, playfully complementing each other with titles like "handsome and nature lover" and "the most beautiful girl in the world" or "cute smile." But beyond the lighthearted banter, we started caring for each other sincerely.

One day, she casually asked me, "Who is your girlfriend?" In a light-hearted manner, I replied, "You." She responded with false anger, saying, "Are you mad? Don't say such things." I quickly added, "I'm just kidding." Sensing an opportunity, I asked for her phone number, and like most girls, she put up a

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little drama, questioning my motives. But after some time, she agreed, playfully stating, “You’re very lucky.” I teasingly replied, “And you’re so filmy.”

Two years flew by in the blink of an eye. Slowly, we began talking on voice calls, and with time, something profound started to develop between us. The days we didn’t talk felt incomplete, as if a piece of our connection was missing. One day, I spontaneously suggested meeting in person, but she hesitated and declined. Determined, I continued to chat with her, trying my best to convince her. Eventually, my efforts paid off, and she agreed to meet for a cup of coffee at Phoenix Palassio after a week.

*“Tumko paane ke liye, khudko kho chuka hun,
Ab bas tujhe apna banakar tujhme khona chahta hun.
Saal guzar gaye teri aankhon me aankhein daale,
Bas ek baar nazar se nazar milaana chahta hoon.”*

The anticipation built up within me as the day approached. Being in a hostel, it would take me six hours to reach the meeting spot. I decided to make it a day trip, planning to see her in the morning and return late at night. Finally, the day arrived when I would reunite with her after so many years. Though a tinge of nervousness crept in, excitement overwhelmed me. I didn’t want to show my eagerness too openly; I wanted her to know that I had missed her, but I also wanted her to admit that she had missed me even more. And in that, I would find a sense of pride. Crazy mind , Crazy feelings eh!

The day of our meeting, I made several calls, ensuring that we knew each other’s exact locations. After 20 calls and careful coordination, we finally met. I couldn’t help but feel an urge

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to embrace her tightly, giving her that long-awaited “Jadoo ki jhappi” (magical hug). My eyes quickly scanned her from head to toe as I took in her appearance—her parrot green suit, beautiful earrings, and simple slippers. Describing her was a challenge, for she exuded a unique and indescribable beauty. Her captivating black eyes glistened with a hint of longing, and her face seemed to radiate under the moonlight. The delicate features of her face, like a perfectly sculpted nose and bright-pink lips, contrasted against her milky-white complexion. Somebody was standing with a blower nearby to get her streaked hair to cover her face so that she could look sexier managing it. She was beyond stunning, a goddess who was completely out of my league. I couldn’t look away; it was as if I had fallen in love all over again.

We exchanged formal hellos and engaged in casual small talk about our days and general well-being. It felt awkward conversing with her in person compared to our comfortable text exchanges. We ordered some starters, but my focus was primarily on devouring the food. I had been famished, as if I had been hungry for years. It was such a beautiful feeling, spending time with someone you like, being the reason behind your smiles. Meanwhile, I noticed she was expecting someone else, as she spoke on the phone, giving directions to the restaurant. Perhaps another friend was joining us.

To my surprise, I saw a familiar face approaching our table. It was Ashlesha, girl from her class who was the crush of many. I quickly held up the menu card to conceal my presence, hoping she wouldn’t notice me. Unfortunately, luck was not on my side, and she came straight to the table where Vartika and I were seated. They were best friends, and I couldn’t help but sigh inwardly at the circumstances.

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“Hey , Tum idhar kidhar ?”, were the first words that escaped her lips as soon as she saw me.

“Haan , Bhukha baitha tha , Ye madamji ne khaana khila diya”, I replied.

Vartika giggled and chimed in, “Ashlesha and I have been best friends since kindergarten.”

“Alright, alright, I accept it. Can we now focus on the food?” I interjected, attempting to break the ice.

The rest of our triple date proceeded smoothly, filled with laughter, shared stories, and moments of embarrassment. We bid farewell to each other, hoping to meet again soon. As I returned to college, my mind was filled with thoughts of the day’s events.

Little did I know that the path ahead would be filled with challenges and heartache, but for now, I savored the moments we shared and held onto the hope that someday, our relationship would evolve into something beyond friendship.

As the days went by, I found myself unable to shake off the memories of that special meeting. Every moment we spent together became etched in my mind, leaving an indelible mark on my heart. The laughter, the smiles, and the genuine connection we shared made it an unforgettable experience.

In the aftermath of that meeting, something unexpected happened. Vartika, Shreyansh, Ashlesha, and I became even closer friends. We formed a tight-knit group, sharing our joys and sorrows, and supporting one another through thick and thin.

Ashlesha couldn’t help but notice the subtle glances and unspoken chemistry between Vartika and me. Curiosity got the better of her, and she decided to consult Shreyansh. Shreyansh, being the loyal friend he was, didn’t hold back and spilled the

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beans about my feelings for Vartika. He shared the entire story with Ashlesha, leaving no stone unturned. Now, both Ashlesha and Shreyansh conspired in their own playful ways to bring Vartika and me closer.

They orchestrated situations where Vartika and I had more opportunities to interact, ensuring that our bond deepened with each passing day. They became our silent wingmen, supporting and encouraging our connection, hoping that our friendship would blossom into something more profound.

I couldn't help but admire their efforts and their genuine care for our happiness. It was heartwarming to have such amazing friends who understood the depths of my emotions and were willing to go the extra mile to see us together. Their support gave me the courage to take small steps towards revealing my true feelings to Vartika.

In the midst of all the friendly banter and shared moments, I couldn't deny the growing affection within me. Vartika had become an integral part of my life, and I couldn't imagine a future without her presence. Each interaction, each conversation, and each stolen glance only solidified my longing to have her by my side.

Love is a beautiful emotion, so beautiful that you don't need to be in love to feel love. Sometimes, you can't put a name on it. You can't say I love that person, but it's something like love, a little like love, or a lot like love. You try to figure out what exactly it is. But then, you give up. You are scared to tell them. You are scared of a no. You are scared that you might end up ruining this thing. But what is that thing? Well, I can look at her and smile. I can talk to her. I can laugh with her. I can say good morning. And for me, that's enough. That's too much happiness for me to risk.

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Little did I know that this journey would not be without its fair share of obstacles. Challenges and heartache lay ahead, testing the strength of our bond. But for now, I cherished the friendship we had cultivated and hoped that, in time, our relationship would evolve into something beautiful and profound—a love that would surpass all expectations and stand the test of time.

Heavens Cried



Graduation day had finally arrived, a day filled with immense joy and celebration. It marked the end of one chapter and the beginning of a new journey. Amidst the excitement and the sea of gowns and caps, there was a sense of apprehension within me. It was the day I had been waiting for, the day I mustered up the courage to confront my feelings for Vartika.

For years, I had carried the torch for her, cherishing every moment we spent together and hoping that one day our friendship would blossom into something more. The thought of losing her again was unbearable, and I couldn't let this opportunity slip away.

However, amidst the whirlwind of emotions, something unexpected had happened. Shreyansh, my dear friend, had found love himself. He had formed a close bond with Ashlesha, and their friendship had blossomed into a beautiful relationship. Witnessing their happiness added another layer of complexity to my own feelings.

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As I watched Shreyansh and Ashlesha grow closer, I realized the significance of their connection. Their relationship served as a reminder of the value of true friendship and the importance of cherishing those bonds. It made me reflect on what Vartika meant to me and how much her friendship truly mattered.

Shreyansh and Ashlesha, having found their own happiness, took it upon themselves to bridge the gap between Vartika and me. They saw the genuine affection we had for each other and believed that we had the potential to be more than just friends.

With their unwavering support, Shreyansh and Ashlesha started orchestrating opportunities for Vartika and me to spend more time together. They organized group outings, casual get-togethers, and even subtly encouraged deeper conversations between us. Their efforts were fueled by the genuine desire to see both of us happy.

With a heart torn between longing and fear, I knew it was time to take a leap of faith. I mustered up every ounce of courage and decided to confess my love to Vartika, hoping for reciprocation. Graduation day seemed like the perfect occasion to lay my heart bare. As the day drew to a close, and the night sky enveloped us, I mustered up the courage to have a heartfelt conversation with Vartika. We had been through so much together, and I couldn't bear the thought of keeping my feelings hidden any longer. It was time to take a leap of faith and lay my heart bare.

Finding a quiet corner away from the jubilant crowd, I dialed Vartika's number, hoping that the words I had rehearsed countless times would flow seamlessly from my lips. As the phone rang, my heart raced with anticipation, uncertain of how she would respond.

"Hello," Vartika's voice echoed softly through the phone. My voice trembled slightly as I mustered the strength to speak

my truth. “Vartika, there’s something I need to tell you. It’s been weighing on my heart for a long time, and I can’t keep it to myself any longer.”

Curiosity tinged her voice as she replied, “Harsh, what is it? You sound serious.”

Taking a deep breath, I spoke the words that held the weight of my emotions. “Vartika, I love you. I have loved you for years, and I can’t imagine my life without you. You mean the world to me, and I want to spend the rest of my life with you. Will you be mine?”

There was a brief pause on the other end of the line, as if time itself held its breath, waiting for her response. When she finally spoke, her voice carried a mix of tenderness and uncertainty.

“Harsh, I appreciate your honesty and the depth of your feelings for me. But I need to be honest with you too. I’m not sure about my own feelings at the moment. Our friendship is incredibly important to me, and I’m afraid that taking it to a romantic level might jeopardize what we already have.”

Her words felt like a wave crashing over me, washing away the hope that had blossomed within my heart. It was not the answer I had hoped for, but I respected her honesty and her desire to protect our friendship. She had handled the situation with grace and empathy, prioritizing the preservation of our friendship above all else. It was a testament to her character and the value she placed on the connection we had built over the years.

In that moment, my heart felt heavy, and a pang of sadness washed over me. People say actions speak louder than words, but sometimes it’s the words that hurt the most. Actions are easy to ignore, but words hit you right where it hurts.

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“Jaane woh meri bekarari ko samajhti kyun nahi, Jo mujhe mehsoos hota hai, woh use mehsoos hota kyun nahi? Apne pyaar se seechta aaya hoon main is phool ko, Mere pyaar ka yeh phool uske dil me khilta kyun nahi? Har pal uske pyaar ki galiyon mein bhatakta hoon, Na Jane woh bhule se bhi wahan se guzarti kyun nahi? Maar chuka hoon har ehsaas ko uske pyaar mein, Ichhaon ka yeh aashiyana fir bhi bikharta kyun nahin?”

But deep down, I knew that Vartika's happiness and comfort were paramount, even if it meant suppressing my own desires. It served as a bittersweet realization that sometimes, love doesn't always follow the path we hope for. I replied with a hint of disappointment but an understanding tone.

“I understand. Our friendship is incredibly precious to me too, and I would never want to jeopardize that. Please know that I will always cherish our bond, regardless of how our feelings evolve. I just needed to express my emotions, and I'm grateful for your honesty.”

There was a shared silence, as if both of us were grappling with the weight of the moment. It was a bittersweet realization, but I knew that our friendship would endure, even if the path to a romantic relationship was not meant to be.

With a gentle sigh, Vartika finally spoke, her voice filled with warmth and gratitude. “Thank you for understanding and for being such an incredible friend. Our bond means the world to me, and I'm glad we can have this conversation openly. Let's continue to support and care for each other, just as we always have.”

And so, amidst the mixture of emotions, we made a silent pact to preserve our friendship and continue supporting each

other through the journey of life.

Graduation day became a turning point, not just in terms of academic achievements, but also in understanding the complexities of relationships. It taught me that love doesn't always follow a predictable path and that sometimes, preserving a cherished friendship is more valuable than risking it for romantic pursuits.

“Raat itni tanhaa kyun hoti hai?

Kismat se apni sabko shikaayat kyun hoti hai?

Ajeeb khel khelti hai kismat!

*Jise hum paa nahi sakte, Usi se mohabbat kyun hoti
hai?”*

Also some things can be so pure that you don't need to have them to love them. You love some people not because you want them. You love them because your heart feels nothing else but love for them. They might be out of your reach. Maybe, you can never have them. But you are still happy that they are a part of your life, in whatever small way. Yes, you still pray for that miracle one day. But you are happy even in this “nothing” relationship. Because for you, this “nothing” fills every gaping hole in your soul.

No matter where our lives take us, I'll always smile whenever her names pops in my mind or whenever there is a notification in my phone. I wish nothing but, the best for her.

As I embarked on the next chapter of my life, I carried the lessons learned from this experience. The unrequited love I held for Vartika would serve as a reminder of the depths of my emotions and the strength of our friendship. And while the road ahead may be filled with challenges and heartache, I

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embraced the realization that our friendship was a precious gem that I couldn't afford to lose. Despite the disappointment of unrequited love, I made a conscious decision to cherish every moment we shared and to support Vartika wholeheartedly.

Love doesn't have an Expiry Date



Despite the rejection, I and Vartika managed to maintain their friendship, determined not to let their unrequited love get in the way. Three years had passed since that fateful graduation day, and although their paths had diverged, a part of me still carried the memories of that time together.

Life had taken us on separate journeys. I pursued my dream of becoming a computer science engineer and moved to Bangalore, while Vartika had followed her passion for teaching and become a professor, settling in Delhi. We both were now in different states, each striving to achieve their goals, but the memory of Vartika remained forever etched in my heart.

It's raining. You sit in the balcony wearing their favourite sweatshirt, drinking their favourite coffee while listening to their favorite song. Just in a hope to feel their presence when they're gone. Somewhere in your heart you have the realization that you can never be together, still you can't stop yourself from thinking about them and the time you spent. And well, this is

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how love is. You never regret the things done in love.

One day, amidst the routine of life, I received an unexpected message from Shreyansh. Shreyansh excitedly shared the news of his upcoming marriage to Ashlesha. My heart swelled with joy for my friend, but there was another emotion that stirred within me—an anticipation that I couldn't ignore.

The news of Shreyansh's wedding brought back a flood of memories, and I couldn't help but think about Vartika. It had been a while since we had spoken, and our lives had taken different paths, but the thought of meeting Vartika again sparked a glimmer of excitement within me. It was a chance to reconnect, to reminisce about the past, and perhaps, find closure for the lingering feelings that still resided in my heart.

As the days counted down to Shreyansh's wedding, I found myself lost in a flurry of emotions. The prospect of seeing Vartika again after so many years stirred a mix of nostalgia, hope, and a touch of apprehension. Would our friendship have withstood the test of time? Would we still share that undeniable connection that had once brought us so close?

I couldn't deny the impact Vartika had on my life. It would take a lot of time to mention all of her great qualities. Her intelligence, sense of humour, sparkling eyes in which I've got lost so many times, sounds so cheesy isn't it? Well but these aren't the things which attracted me towards her. Her sheer determination to be the best every time, to work hard for her ambition is what left me awestruck always. She always wanted to be on the top, she always thought of winning.

She had been my confidante, my source of laughter and support, and even though our paths had diverged, her memory had remained a constant presence in my thoughts. The last conversation we had on Messenger resurfaced in my mind,

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rekindling all the beautiful memories we had shared.

As I reflected on my journey, I realized that Vartika's presence had left an indelible mark on my life. She had shaped me in ways I couldn't fully comprehend, and even though we might not be in regular contact anymore, a part of me still longed for her friendship.

With each passing day, the excitement grew, and I eagerly awaited the opportunity to reunite with Vartika. It wasn't just about rekindling our bond, but also about finding closure and rediscovering the friendship that had meant so much to both of us.

In the midst of life's twists and turns, our paths had brought them to this moment. The prospect of meeting Vartika again held the promise of both nostalgic reminiscence and the potential for new beginnings. I knew that whatever the outcome, our story would forever hold a special place in my heart.

As the days drew closer to Shreyansh's wedding, Harsh found himself experiencing a whirlwind of emotions. The excitement of meeting Vartika again was tinged with a touch of nervousness. It had been three years since they last saw each other, and he couldn't help but wonder how things might have changed between them.

During this time, my thoughts often wandered back to the early days of our friendship. We had shared so many laughs, inside jokes, and late-night conversations about our dreams and aspirations. The bond we had formed was built on a foundation of trust and understanding, and I hoped it was strong enough to withstand the test of time and distance.

In the evenings, I would sit by my window, looking at the stars, and reminisce about the memories we had created together. I

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remembered the first time we had met in college, the way her smile could light up a room, and the warmth of her laughter that seemed to chase away all worries.

Yet, amidst these cherished memories, there lingered a hint of sadness. I couldn't help but think about the day I had confessed my love to Vartika. The memory of her gentle rejection still stung, but I had come to understand and respect her decision. Our friendship meant too much to me to let my feelings get in the way.

As the day of the wedding approached, I felt a mix of anticipation and trepidation. I wondered if Vartika had changed, if life had taken her on a different path, and if we would still find that easy camaraderie we once had.

Finally, the day arrived, and I traveled to my hometown for the wedding. The moment I stepped into the venue, I was greeted with warmth and excitement from friends and family. But in the back of my mind, my focus remained on that long-awaited reunion.

During the wedding festivities, I caught glimpses of Vartika from a distance. She looked as radiant as ever, and seeing her again brought a rush of emotions. I mustered up the courage to approach her during a quiet moment at the reception.

As I stood before her, I could feel my heart pounding in my chest. I smiled and said, "Hey, Vartika, it's been a while."

Vartika's eyes lit up with surprise and delight as she replied, "Harsh, it's so good to see you! It's been too long. How have you been?"

The conversation flowed naturally, as if the years apart had never existed. We laughed, we reminisced, and we caught up on each other's lives. The more we talked, the more I felt that familiar connection reigniting.

Love doesn't have an Expiry Date

As the night progressed, we found ourselves stealing moments away from the festivities, just like old times. Under the starry sky, we shared stories of our journeys since graduation, the challenges we faced, and the dreams we still held dear.

In one of these candid conversations, I mustered the courage to ask, "Vartika, do you remember that day, during our graduation, when I told you how I felt about you?"

Vartika's gaze softened, and she nodded. "Of course I do. I remember everything. You're a very special person to me."

I took a deep breath and continued, "I want you to know that I treasure our friendship, and I'm grateful for everything we've shared. You've always been an important part of my life, and even though we might not talk but you're never far from my thoughts."

Vartika's eyes glistened with emotion, and she gently touched his hand. "Harsh, you've always held a special place in my heart too."

Vartika smiled softly, a mix of emotions playing across her face. "Harsh, I've always cherished our friendship, and I'm grateful for the bond we share. Life has taken us on different paths, and we've grown individually. But that doesn't change the fact that you hold a special place in my heart."

My heart felt both heavy and light at the same time. I had hoped for a different outcome, but I couldn't deny the beauty of our friendship and the connection we had built. With a bittersweet smile, I said, "Vartika, I want nothing more than your happiness. If that means we remain friends, then I will always cherish the moments we have together."

Vartika's eyes shimmered with unshed tears as she reached out and hugged me tightly. "Thank you. Our friendship is something I hold dear, and it will always be a part of my life."

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We held each other for a moment, our embrace speaking volumes about the unspoken bond between us. Despite our unrequited love, we found solace in knowing that our friendship could withstand any challenge.

As the night wore on, we rejoined the celebration, our hearts lighter and our spirits uplifted. The reunion had brought a renewed sense of appreciation for the moments we shared and the memories we had created.

We danced together, our laughter echoing through the night, as we celebrated the enduring power of friendship and the ability to treasure the connections that shape our lives.

In that moment, we both knew that our paths may diverge further, but the impact we had on each other would forever remain etched in our hearts. And no matter where life took us, the bond we shared would always be a beacon of warmth and love.

I couldn't help but feel a pang of sadness as I bid farewell to Vartika. We had shared a beautiful reunion, but now it was time to face the reality of our separate lives. We embraced tightly, our eyes filled with unshed tears, reluctant to let go.

I whispered, my voice choked with emotion, "Vartika, these moments we've shared have been unforgettable. The laughter, the conversations, and even the bittersweet moments have shaped me in ways I never imagined. Thank you for being a part of my life."

Vartika's voice quivered as she replied, "Harsh, you have brought so much joy into my life. I'll always cherish the memories we've created together. Take care of yourself."

Life isn't a fairy tale for a happy ending always. We released each other, our eyes locked for a lingering moment before turning away. I walked away, my heart heavy with mixed

Love doesn't have an Expiry Date

emotions. I returned home, seeking solace in the comforting presence of my family. I immersed myself in their love and support, hoping to distract myself from the ache of parting ways with Vartika.

Days turned into weeks, and as life carried on, I couldn't help but think of our last meeting. The memory was etched into my mind, like a suspended moment in time. I couldn't shake off the feeling that it was our final encounter, and a part of my longed to freeze time and relive those precious moments once more.

Before going to Bangalore, I visited Shreyansh's home to wish newly married couple. After offering my heartfelt congratulations to the newly married couple, I found a moment alone with Ashlesha. I wished her a happy married life, and she smiled warmly in response.

Ashlesha, sensing my lingering thoughts, leaned closer and whispered, "Acha suno, there's something I want to share with you. Vartika, she still loves you. In these past days, she has been waiting, hoping that you would come back for her again."

My heart skipped a beat at Ashlesha's revelation. I felt a surge of hope and longing, mixed with a tinge of regret for not recognizing her own emotions earlier. With newfound clarity, my mind raced, and I couldn't ignore the truth that had been unveiled.

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The car pulled up at the airport, and as the driver loaded my luggage onto the trolley, a wave of uncertainty washed over me. I clutched my boarding pass tightly and made my way towards the waiting area. The atmosphere was tense, with multiple flight cancellations due to bad weather. My mother had reminded me to check if my flight was affected, but I had neglected to do so in my preoccupation with thoughts of Vartika.

As I sat there, a heavy weight settled upon my heart. I couldn't escape the realization that I had let Vartika down, that I had failed to be the person she needed me to be. The enormity of my mistakes hit me with full force. How could I expect her to take me back after everything I had done? If I had truly loved her, I would never have left her side. Maybe it was time for me to be alone for a while, to refrain from causing any more pain and damage.

Lost in my thoughts, I looked up at the flight schedule board. Amongst the cancellations and delays, two flights stood out

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prominently. One was bound for Bangalore, offering the allure of a fresh start and new possibilities. The other was headed to Delhi, representing the familiarity of the past. The universe had conspired to bring us together once again. The decision before me felt monumental.

Bangalore—cancelled. Bangalore—cancelled. I repeated the words in my mind as my gaze shifted back and forth between the destinations. My mother had instructed me to call her once I boarded the flight, but now there was no flight to board. Confusion and indecision consumed me. My eyes kept shifting from Bangalore ... to Delhi ... Delhi. Should I return to Vartika? Or should I seize the opportunity to embark on a new journey in Bangalore? Alternatively, was it time to confront the past and catch the delayed flight to Delhi?

With a mix of desperation and uncertainty, I took out my cell phone and dialed a familiar number, aware of my selfishness and my past failures. We are all allowed one significant mistake in our lives, aren't we? As the phone rang, I felt a rush of nervousness and anticipation.

"Hey," a voice greeted me from the other side. It was Vartika.

"Hi," I replied, my eyes still scanning the flight schedule board. The words, the letters, and the numbers suddenly came into sharp focus. DELHI INDIGO 2.15 P.M. DELAYED.

"Where are you?" Vartika asked, her voice filled with curiosity.

"Minutes away from a flight to Bangalore," I confessed, unable to contain the desire to see her again, to hold her close.

There was a moment of silence on the other end of the line, and I could sense the mixture of surprise and confusion in her voice. I wanted to get out of the phone and hug her. I wanted to kiss her and make her mine. "Oh, back to work. Best of luck,"

she said, her words tinged with a touch of sadness. It was such a pleasure to hear her again.

“Thank you,” I responded, trying to steady my racing thoughts. “So, when’s your flight?”

“I am thinking of missing my flight,” I confessed, realizing in that moment that my decision had become clearer as I spoke to her.

“What? Why?” Vartika exclaimed, her voice filled with genuine surprise and concern.

“I am coming to Delhi,” I declared, my voice filled with determination.

“Delhi? Why?” she questioned, clearly taken aback by my unexpected revelation.

“I met Ashlesha,” I revealed, my voice trembling with vulnerability. “I know you lied.” ‘...’ I know you love me,’ I said, ‘... and I love you.’ I said.

Silence hung in the air, and then, in a whisper, I heard Vartika’s response, her voice cracking with emotion. “I remember the day we first met. From that moment, I was in love with you. Slowly, we came together, and I cherished every moment of it. I loved the way you cared for me, the way you smiled at me, the way you looked at me with adoration. There was nothing about you that I could ever hate. If there’s any blame to be placed, it rests solely on my shoulders. You were never wrong; it was my own insecurities and fears that clouded my judgment. Harsh, I love you more than I love myself. I am sorry, truly sorry, for the pain I caused. I want to relive those moments with you, and I want to be the one to propose this time.”

Her words pierced through my heart, mingling with the hope that had started to blossom within me. The next flight to Delhi was leaving in an hour, and I knew I had to act swiftly. “We

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will talk when I get there,” I promised her, my voice filled with determination.

She continued speaking, her voice growing softer, “But...”

“We will have the chance to discuss everything,” I interjected, not willing to let doubt or hesitation cloud my resolve. “I am on my way, Vartika.”

A surge of relief washed over me as I realized that fate was conspiring in our favor. The universe had granted me more time to make things right. A smile tugging at the corners of my lips. “I’m coming for you.”

Vartika’s voice wavered as she tried to make sense of the situation. “But why? Why are you doing this?”

“Because, Vartika,” I spoke with unwavering conviction, “I love you. It has been five long years, and every day without you felt incomplete. I want to start a new with you, to create a future filled with love and happiness. The past is behind us, and now it’s time for us to write our own story.”

The next flight to Delhi leaves in an hour. “I should get a ticket!” I said. ‘But—’ ‘We will talk when I get there!’ I said. She was still talking when I cut the phone. She didn’t want me to come, but I didn’t care any more.

As I ended the call, a renewed sense of purpose filled me. I made my way to the ticket counter, where a friendly face greeted me. “One ticket to Delhi?” she asked, a knowing smile on her lips. “An angry girlfriend, I suppose?”

I couldn’t help but chuckle at her remark. “No,” I replied with a twinkle in my eyes, “an opportunity for love and redemption.”

With the ticket in hand, I walked away from the counter, carrying a newfound sense of hope and determination. The ticket-counter girl’s encouraging words echoed in my ears, urging me forward. “Go! Get her!”

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And so, I boarded the delayed flight to Delhi, ready to face my past, to rekindle a love that had never truly died, and to seize the chance for a future filled with happiness and togetherness.

As I stepped off the plane at Delhi airport, my heart raced with anticipation. I scanned the bustling crowd, searching for Vartika's familiar face. And there she was, standing near the arrival gate, her eyes locked onto mine, a mix of excitement and nervousness evident in her expression.

Without wasting a moment, I made my way towards her, the distance between us shrinking with each determined step. I know that this is the moment I had been waiting for, the moment when I could finally ask her to spend the rest of her life with me. When we finally stood face to face, I couldn't contain the overwhelming emotions surging within me. I enveloped her in a tight embrace, feeling the warmth of her presence and the undeniable connection that had always drawn us together.

We held each other for a moment, cherishing the reunion and the realization that this was the beginning of a new chapter in our lives. As I pulled away slightly, our eyes met, and the unspoken words between us spoke volumes. In that tender gaze, I could see all the love, longing, and hope we had carried for each other over the years.

Taking a deep breath, I mustered the courage to speak the words that had been burning in my heart. "Vartika," I whispered, my voice laced with vulnerability and sincerity, "I have loved you for as long as I can remember. I have missed you every single day we spent apart."

Her eyes shimmered with unshed tears as a radiant smile bloomed across her face. She had been waiting for this moment too. "I wonder why you chose me and why you are with me. I know we've gone through a lot. We have had hard times, but

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we have also had good times. We don't always share the same things but there is an understanding between us. A look into your eyes is enough to tell me much you love me and how much you care about me. It took me a few days away from you to realize it but then I understand. When you asked me if I trusted you, I looked for reasons not to and I found none. I don't ask for much, only for you to love me as I am. I only wish to be by your side and with no one else. I am sorry but I can't stop loving you. Will you please love me like you did before?" she said softly, her voice filled with conviction and love. "I promise you this, from this day forth: I will love you forever—don't' ever doubt that. I will never want anyone else's touch but yours; you make me feel like I am the only woman in the world. You are the only man in this world as far as I am concerned. You are my heart and my soul. I feel as though we were always meant to be together. I have always believed that I had a soulmate out there and now I am sure that is you. I see it every time I look into your eyes and I feel it when you hold me in your arms. I love you so much. These five words have more meaning than the meanings of all the words in the world. I love you with all that I am. I love you for all that you are."

The weight of the past seemed to dissipate, replaced by a renewed sense of joy and possibility. We stood there, in the bustling airport, lost in our own little world, oblivious to the world around us. The bond between us had grown stronger with time, weathering the storms and challenges that life had thrown our way.

As we embraced once more, I knew that this was the ending we had both longed for. The novel of our lives had reached its climax, with a love that had endured and triumphed. Our journey had been filled with twists and turns, heartache and

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redemption, but ultimately, it had led us back to each other.

And so, hand in hand, we walked out of the airport, ready to embark on a new chapter together, our hearts intertwined and our souls forever connected. The love that had once been unrequited had now blossomed into a beautiful, enduring love story, one that would be told and cherished for generations to come.

Epilogue



Years had passed since Harsh and Vartika's chance meeting at the airport. Their love had endured the test of time, and they had built a beautiful life together.

Their love had brought them two beautiful children who were the embodiment of their love and devotion. As they watched their children grow, they saw reflections of their own journey and knew that their love would be passed down through generations.

In the later years, Harsh and Vartika reminiscing about the incredible journey they had embarked on together. They laughed at the memories of their youthful adventures and smiled at the thought of the love that had stood the test of time.

As they looked into each other's eyes, they knew that their love story would live on forever. The love they had shared would continue to inspire and touch the lives of those around them, reminding everyone that true love knows no boundaries.

And so, as the final chapter closed on their remarkable love story, it would forever be etched in their hearts and the hearts of all those who had witnessed their incredible journey.

About the Author



Jatin can usually be found reading a book, and that book will more likely than not be a psychological thriller. Writing a novel was always on his bucket list, and eventually, kaafirana ishq, it became a reality. When not absorbed in the latest gripping page-turner, Jatin loves coding, cooks very badly, enjoys spending time with family members, and otherwise spends far too much time at the computer.

You can connect with me on:

⌚ <https://jatinkumarverma.github.io/My-Info-Card>

About the book

This is a story that will warm your heart, make you laugh, and maybe even shed a tear or two. It is a story of love, hope, and the power of the human spirit. So sit back, relax, and join them on their unforgettable journey of love and discovery.



For more information, scan the qr code.