



I'm A Girl After All

(A Pious Love Story)

By Tabish Tanseef

**Dedicated to one of the strongest and bravest girl
I have ever come across in my entire life.**

I'm A Girl.

I'm An Indian Girl.

I'm An Indian Muslim Girl.

“Do I need to say Anything More?”

Prologue

One line I want to say to all those out there who share their secrets with anyone “When you can’t keep your secrets to yourself, how could you even imagine that someone else would keep them for you.” But some secrets are not meant to be kept as secret, they need to be told to everyone.

I knew when she was telling me about her life she wouldn’t have imagined it in her worst nightmare that I will pen it down and expose her secret to everyone like this. But like I say some secrets are meant to be told and it is one such story which I am going to tell you. This is about a girl whom I know since my childhood. The ideal girl, the girl whom I always adore the most, the girl who was everyone’s favorite. I didn’t remember a single time when she said ‘No’ to anyone for anything. She set such a benchmark for everyone which is almost impossible to break in every damn field. I would rather say she makes the life of her brothers and cousins miserable. Every parent gave her example to their kids in every damn situation whether it is in studies, in house chores or in job, she was absolutely perfect. She was her parent’s pride, her brother’s strength and her friend’s ultimate help. She is the type of girl which any parents would ask God for.

Oh! Such an asshole I am, told so many things about her but not her name, she was Rifa, Rifa Husnain. She is married now, has a rich husband, a beautiful daughter and a fantastic job. You can say a fully furnished well settled life, what else would anyone desire after having all such luxuries. Her life was absolutely perfect, according to everyone who knows her, who meet her and even according to me until something stupid struck in my mind and that was ‘perfect’, I mean how someone’s life could be so perfect, nobody lives a perfect life, everyone has some or the other problem in their lives. What was her problem? I know this was a stupid question, but believe me this is something which strikes my mind.

I thought everyone has a story, an untold story, and similarly she must have it too which I wanted to know. I don’t know whether everyone was that chutiya or I am that intelligent who noticed it, but anyhow I want to know the reality, the hidden truth from her mouth only. I have a number of questions running concurrently in my mind which I wanted to ask her.

She is the one, from whom I take most of the advices of my life, I have even told her about the one whom I love. Even though neither she knows her name nor she has ever seen her, like everyone else but rest of the story she knows. One fine day I had a tiff with my love so I messaged Rifa and told her about the fight and she replied,

“Tabish, if tiffs were not present there then relationships would be rather boring. These small-small fights build the relationship stronger. These fights help you to know each other much better. Being in love with someone is the best time in one’s life. Just one advice I want to give you, live it to the fullest else it will be late and you will regret it later. Good night.”

Her message makes me much more curious now and gives me one more reason to think that something was buried deep inside her which nobody knows. Even though it was very late at night when I was talking to her but I couldn’t resist myself and ask her,

“I want to know something”, I typed.

“What?” She replied.

“YOUR STORY”, I asked.

“What Story?” she sends with a witty smiley.

“I said I want to know YOUR STORY”, I send with an angry smiley.

“HAHAHA, I don’t have any story, its late now, go sleep Bbye” she sends me and immediately went offline.

Again her laughter made me think that I was not wrong, she has a Story, A Damn Interesting Story and I really want to read each and every single word of that story. Then I went to sleep with the thought of digging each and every part of that interesting story tomorrow.

Finally the sun rises up and a blush of smile was there on my face when I removed the duvet and rushed towards the bathroom. The thought of meeting her and asking her everything about her perfect life was giving me Goosebumps over and over again. But will she tell me if she has anything to hide? Why would she tell me? What if I was wrong and she didn’t have any story? What if she got angry and our friendship gets ruined? All these thoughts were also disturbing me. But what so ever will happen I am ready to take the risk and if there is something, I will definitely take that out, as I am best at it which most of my friends think.

By 9:30 in the morning I reached her home when she was getting ready for her office. I told her that I am going that way and I will drop her there, on which she easily agreed.

She was sitting beside me in the car when I suddenly asked, “hmm”.

“Hmm hmm” she replied with a smile.

“I asked you something last night, I want the answer” I said.

“What sort of a story you are talking about? I don’t have any story” she said looking straight through the windshield of the car in a bit frustrated tone.

“I think you have a story because I can see it in your eyes. I have known you since so long and I am pretty sure that there is much more then said” I said looking straight into her eyes.

“So let me tell you Mr. Tabish, you are wrong. I don’t have any such story you are asking for” she said looking straight into my eyes with a complete fake smile.

“OMG you are perfect in this too” I said.

“In what?” she asked.

“Lying” I said.

She instantly turned her face to the other side.

“Oh come on yaar, you know you can trust me” I said a bit politely after seeing her getting emotional.

“Would that make any difference now, if I have a story? Nobody cares about your feelings, your emotions until they are of their benefits. All they care is the sympathy they show whether it is enough or they need to show it more and I don’t want anyone’s sympathy. I am very happy” she said.

I immediately applied the breaks of the car and asked “Are You?”

“I am getting late for my work. Start driving” she said without answering my question.

I started driving again and said “You know every single thing about me and you know that you can trust me and you know what matters more to me emotions or a fake sympathy” I said without looking at her.

After a minute of absolute silence she said “Ok then listen, you are right. I have a story, a damn beautiful story. Even I had someone very special in my life, who loved me more than anyone in this world. Nobody, I said nobody could ever love me more than him. He is not with me now, busy in his cores, I get married now and have my own life but even today I can say it with full surety that he loves me the same way he did sixteen years back” she literally shouted on me and with that a tear rolled down her cheek.

“Wait, wait, what have had happened sixteen year back? Who was he? I want to know everything, tell me from the starting” I asked and thought “yes I did it”.

“My story can’t be completed in few sentences, it takes more time then you are willing to give me” she said looking the lines of her hands.

“I don’t care how long will it take, I want to listen each and every single bit of it” I said with full enthusiasm.

“My story is more like a full course meal. You will enjoy it till the time you get that salty dessert. At first you will smile and then you’ll cry, you’ll cry hard. Don’t say me that I didn’t warn you earlier” she said with a witty smile.

By that time we reached her workplace. She is the receptionist at Hotel Sartaj which is located besides railway station. After reaching there she opened the door and stepped out of the car.

“Wait, when you are going tell me?” I asked tilting towards the window of the other side.

“Today 6:00 in the evening at the Blue Balichta Cafe” she said.

“At least tell me his name” I asked.

“mmmm, his name is hidden in my name” she said and started walking towards the gate of her hotel.

“R-I-F-A.....I-F-R-A....A-R-F-I...A-R-I-F...yes it’s Arif” I murmured and guessed the name.

“Is it Arif?” I shouted sitting within the car itself.

She turned her face towards me and passed a smile and after that entered into the hotel. Her smile gave me the answer that I was right.

It was raining heavily and I was getting very late. It was already 5:50 pm and I haven’t reached there. The traffic of Delhi, everyone knows about it and in monsoon, it is at its peak. I somehow managed to reach there at 6:15 pm. I almost scanned the café, trying to find her but she hasn’t arrived yet. The café was partially filled as it was raining so I found a table near the glass wall from which all the outside world is completely visible. Just after 5 minutes she also reached there. Her clothes were completely drenched because of the rain but she has covered herself with her dupatta. I showed her my hand and gestured her to come there.

“What the hell is this? Can’t we talk tomorrow” she said while trying to dry her face with her already wet dupatta.

“No, I can’t wait anymore and for God’s sake please start now” I said.

By that time a waiter reached our table to take the order.

“One cappuccino with added vanilla and extra chocolate” I said.

“One cold coffee” she said.

“Ok please start now, I literally beg you” I said with folding hands and a begging face.

“Ok, but don’t you dare tell this to anyone, I said anyone. No one knows about it except one of my friend” she said.

“Ok promise, but tell me one thing, why are you telling this to me?” I asked.

“May be because, you have asked me. While no one ever bothered to know, no one ever noticed it but you” she said.

“Oh! That means I was right, everyone was chutiya and I am that intelligent who noticed it,” I thought.

“Ok then listen now” she said while looking out of the glass inside the cafe.

1

Sixteen years have passed but each and every single thing is as clear in my mind as if it had happened yesterday. Whenever I thought about that time, it brings a pink blush of smile all over my face and this whenever comes every single day, every single night. With smile come the tears, the endless stream of tears. Sometimes I wanted to yell, I wanted to shout why? Why God why? Why me? Why it happened with me? Why am I being someone who is not at all me? I feel helpless. I feel as if I'm a little mice trapped inside that little cage where I couldn't find an escape of the trap I'm in. I always feel as if I'm sinking in the deep blue sea where I'm not trying to rescue myself, not even calling out someone for help, not even throwing my hands and legs in water to come up. But this should be done to me, I deserve this. What I did to him is far more painful than what I'm going through. I deserve more than this. But I wish I could tell him why I have done that. I'm a girl, and girls are born to sacrifice all through her life and this is what I have done too. I wish I could tell him how much I miss him, how much I miss the talk we had, how much I miss the time I spent with him, everything he did for me I remember to every single detail.

I remember, it was July 2000, our first day after the summer break in 6th standard at St. Joseph School. Everyone was so happy and was in their chirpiest mood. After all they were meeting their friends after a long time. There were no facebook or whats app not even the personal cell phone at that time as the kids of today has and maybe that's why the emotions were more real and pious. The playground was completely filled with chirping, laughter and shouting of kids. It was before the bell for assembly rang. Soon after the bell rang everyone formed a queue. Everyone was busy in noticing the new faces in their class, who are the new comers. Some were the completely new faces while some joined from the other section of the previous standard that got merged in this year.

Both girls and boys were standing in a separate queue and the prayer was about to start. Everyone joined their hands and then suddenly I realized that a guy, well a really cute guy I must say, standing beside me was continuously staring me through the corner of his eyes. He seemed to have a familiar face and then I remembered that he was in the other section before joining my class. I shut my eyes for the prayer and ignored him. After the prayer got over we went to our classroom and that guy got mixed into crowd of other students.

When we were in the classroom everyone was chattering before the teacher entered our room and I think everyone can relate this to as this is the scene of every classroom of every school before the arrival of the teacher. Soon after that, Mam Fatima entered our room and everyone gets settled on their seats. After that she started calling our names for the attendance. While she was calling out names of the students she calls

“Arif Khan”

“Arif Khan” she said again looking at the last seat where the same guy who was staring me in the assembly was busy in eating his lunch from his Tiffin box.

“Arif Khan” this time she literally shouted.

“Yes Ma'am” he tried to say but actually something else came out of his mouth as it was completely filled with the parantha.

“Get out of my classroom, now.” She said in full anger and he simply walks out of the classroom. This incident creates a completely negative image of this guy in my perspective.

After that for a very long period of time I didn’t have any idea of that guy as we haven’t interacted, though he was in my class only. I actually find him over smart and that was the reason I never noticed him again. Many times I heard girls talking about him as he was really good looking but looks never ever remain the criteria for me to judge anyone so I rather walked out of those situations whenever he was the topic of discussion.

At that time I used to be a bookworm, always studying some or the other thing. I was the topper of my class, a lean girl with two ponytails and not so good looking you can say. But it was not like that I was in the studies only, I was always involved in each and every activity of school and may be that was the reason that I was the favorite student of all my teachers. I was way beyond mature as per my age at that time as well. I know what was good for me and what not. That is why hardly anything bothers me. What others were doing was never my concerns but others always find a very good friend in me. I was the topper of my class since the time I joined the school, don’t think that I am boasting about myself but this was true. Everyone came to me to take help and I always help them.

One fine day we were having a free period and all of us were playing in the playground. Girls were playing a completely different game with basketball while boys were busy playing their favorite cricket. After the period gets over we came back to our class. I was sitting with my best friend Zunish Farooqui and then she told me something.

“Rifa, did you notice that?” Zuni asked.

“What?” I asked taking a sip of water from my bottle.

“Arif was more focused on your game then he was on his own” she replied making a stupid face.

“So” I said without even a single expression on my face.

“I even saw him watching you in the classroom many times” she said.

“What are you trying to say dear? Don’t beat around the bush, say what you want to say clearly” I said removing the rubber band from my hairs.

“Sweetheart, I am trying say that I think he likes you” she said with a smile and started blinking her eyes like Minnie mouse.

“HAHAHA, first of all his liking doesn’t matter until I like him too which is next to impossible and secondly you have forgotten I guess, he has just entered puberty” I said in a condescending tone.

“But still didn’t you ever noticed it” she said.

“Sweetheart look at him, he is so good looking why would he be interested in a girl like me?” I said as if I don’t care, well I actually didn’t cared.

“Are you seriously a girl?” she said.

“Let’s come with me, I’ll clear your doubt” I said raising one of my eyebrows.

“Shut up. Bitch” she said and both of us laughed.

It was February when our school organized a picnic to Chandigarh. Everyone was so excited for the trip except me. I knew that mummy wouldn't allow me to go so I rather choose not to ask her as I already know the answer. Everybody was submitting their trip fee except me. Zunish was also going, she even said that her mom will talk to my parents but I refused the offer by saying I am not interested and I want to study for the exam even when I desperately wanted to go.

Just two days were remaining and whole class has just one topic left and that was trip to Chandigarh. Everyone was like we will be bringing this with us, we will be doing this there, we are going to wear this and so much of stuff on that only and I was getting irritated by that again and again. While I know that if I were also a part of that trip I would do the same. But I was thinking that whatever happens, happen for a better. But this thought worked only for a minute and after that I again started thinking that I also wanted to go.

As soon as I reached home mom asked “What happen? Is everything alright?” as she saw me upset.

“No, everything is fine” I said in a low tone.

“Zahim told me that your school is going on a picnic” she confirmed from me which my brother Zahim had told her.

“Yupp” I said lying on the couch and playing with the TV remote.

“Why didn't you tell me about this?” she asked.

“Would that make any difference?” I said.

“Why?” she said giving a perplexed stare.

“You won't let me go either way” I said without even looking at her.

“Oh! You wanted to go then” she asked with a smile.

I remained silent.

“Ok as your wish. We'll send Zahim only. Your dad has given the permission to send both of you, but when you don't want to go its fine” she said teasing me.

“What! Really, are you serious?” I literally jumped from the couch and went to her.

“Are we seriously going?” I asked with excitement.

“Yes” she said.

“Yeyyyyyy” I shouted and hugged her. Even today I remember that moment because that was completely unexpected from her side.

Next day I submit my trip fee and as a result even I am involved in the same topic which makes me irritated the very last day. Zunish was far happier now as I was also going there. Both of us discussed so many things about the things we'll take with us, the eatables and other bullshit. I went back to home and started doing the

preparation for the trip and surprisingly mom was helping me. The night before that day was so long, I hardly sleep that night, may be because of the excitement I had for that picnic.

Finally the day came for which up to some time I was wishing not to come. All of us reached the school before time. Everyone was in their best attires. Excitement and happiness can be seen on anyone's face either student or children. A long queue of tourist buses was standing outside the school. Everyone was in a hurry to grab a seat near window. Finally everyone was settled in the bus. We had only our class students and two of our teachers in the bus. Zunish was sitting on the window seat while I was sitting alongside her. All of us had put our bags on the racks available but I was having problem placing my bag there. Every time I put it there it just fell off. I somehow fit it there, while it was half down and for quite a long time it remained there. After that everybody got busy in chattering, playing games and some even started snoring. While we were busy in playing games I didn't realize that my bag was about to land straight on my head and it suddenly dropped from that rack and Zunish screamed but before it could reach my head, a hand caught it in the mid way. When I turned back to see who caught it, I realized it was Arif who saved my head.

"Thank you" came from my mouth automatically and this was the very first time when I spoke to him in almost one year. He just smiled and went back to his seat in the last of the bus and when I turn, I saw that my seat was completely visible from his seat.

After sometime we entered Chandigarh and excitement of everyone reach to its peak. There was an adrenaline rush in everyone's body like never before. It was the day which everyone wanted to make full of it. We went to the Rock Garden first and all students get divided into their friend's troupes and started enjoying with themselves. Me, Zunish, Soumya and Aditi were having fun together as we also stay together in school also. These 3 were my closest friends but Zunish was more than closest.

That was the time of cameras with a reel in spite of cell phone and digital camera and that is too only some people have and luckily Aditi had it. We clicked lots of pictures with that. After having our lunch we went to the lake and Pinjore garden which was just amazing. After that we ultimately get seated inside the bus to come back to our houses. Everyone was so tired that while coming back either everyone was sleeping or sitting quite. Well some were busy taking out the things they have taken in from the same way. Zunish was all over me, not in that sense obviously but she was sleeping and her head was on my lap while I was awake and thinking about the last one week when I didn't have any chance of coming here and how did I At last I reached my house and immediately went to sleep.

The next few days at school were passed discussing the fun everyone had during the trip. On one fine day we get the notice of our exam which was about to start in just two weeks. Everyone gets busy in preparing for the examination. During that time I didn't get any news of Arif, he was there in the school only but I didn't notice him. In the whole year 'Thank you' was the only interaction I had with him.

One year had passed, summer break started again and everyone went to their grandparent's home which was the only plan the kids of that time had for holidays.

2

Next session started with more students, more enthusiasm and more energy. Everyone joined with full excitement. Everything was new, new classroom, new uniform, new books and new teachers but with the very same naughtiest students and the very same old topper, which was me again. Don't think that I am boasting about myself but this is the fact. I again claimed the undisputed throne and became the class topper. This new class brings new opportunities for me and who knows that this new class would bring such a beautiful phase in my life which I haven't ever imagined that something beautiful like this can also happen to me as well. But this seems beautiful now, at that point of time it was more of a hell for me. This was the time when life took a completely new turn. A turn which was going to change my life forever, for good or worse? Well that is another question.

A completely unknown way appeared in front of me and I had no idea where will it lead, whether it was right or wrong and whether I should be on it or not. But I never ever thought that this way could be so tempting. This was something beyond expectation that I am going to learn a new chapter which is totally out of my syllabus and that is love. At that time love for me was limited to stories and Shahrukh's movies, not beyond that and I have never believed that this will happen to me. But yes, it had happened actually and I'm glad it had happened. My life would be completely different now rather absurd, if that time came without him in the picture of my life. I want to admit that yes he is the one without whom the picture of my life is incomplete, he is the one who had actually filled the colors in my life, he is the one who told me what is life? And how to live it and he is the one who makes me believe that love do exist beyond stories and Shahrukh's movies.

I haven't ever imagined about my life partner at that time, well who would do that we were in 7th standard only, but someone has imagined actually and he imagined me. A 7th standard guy who hasn't even have his moustache by now has already planned his future partner, well that sounds funny isn't it? But yes this guy has set the full story of him and me living together forever in the imaginary world which most of us has created in our minds. This was same guy with whom I just had one line conversation in one complete year. At that time I thought he was mad but now I would say he was madly in love. I remember each and every stupid activity which he did those days. The very same activity which makes me furious at that time now makes me laugh. I just wish if he is here, I would told him that I remember that, I also remember that and that also and everything. I wish, he just sits by my side and we spent the whole night sitting together of the roof facing moon and talking about all the craps he did for me. There is a huge list of things he did and if I tell you, you will die with laughter.

Zunish and many other students from my class have told me many times that they saw Arif watching me whenever I am around either in the canteen or in the classroom or in the assembly time, but that really didn't bothered me as I haven't seen him doing that ever. Half of the year has already passed when I was getting the news that he is watching me everywhere. But I remember, when I actually noticed it for the very first time that something fishy is going on his mind. It was 31st January, his birthday, and that day he was distributing candies to all the students of our class. It was winter that time and all of us were in jerseys and blazers. I was sitting on my seat which was near the window and enjoying the weather. I was looking at our school playground which was completely filled with fog and fog is the reason why I liked winter so much. When I was completely lost in the view outside window, someone tapped my desk, it was Arif and now he came to my seat to give me the candies. He seemed really happy and anyone can say that by merely looking at him. But his happiness was short lived, as when I wished him his face suddenly changed in angry one. Well whenever I remember that incident it makes me feel that I was stupid and I shouldn't have said that. Well his

reply was even more interesting. When he offered me the candies I immediately said in excitement “Happy Birthday Bhai”, well this ‘Bhai’ word is almost offensive for everyone and for the ones who has a crush on you it is more of an AK47 attack. But I must say his bullet proof jacket was equally amazing, I mean his reply which he gave.

“I’m not your Brother, remember that” he said in furious tone and moves to the next seat behind us.

I was completely dumbstruck at that moment thinking what he just said to me. Zunish was sitting just next to me and she started laughing hilariously on me and for a number of days she makes fun of this incident. Few minutes later I turned my face to check Arif and I noticed that the happiness from his face is completely gone and I was the reason but that really didn’t affect me.

Later on that day I saw Arif sitting alone on the his favorite last bench and watching me, surprisingly there was a smile on his face this time even after calling him ‘Brother’ which makes him sad the very same day. Maybe this time he was happy because now he knows that I finally got the glimpse that he likes me. But I knew that his liking doesn’t going to change anything in me, he was never the matter of concern for me ever or no one else if they have this sort of feelings for me.

Now things started happening a bit differently, he comes to school daily but after that birthday incident he started standing on the school gate waiting for me to come and when he saw me coming only then he entered the school gate. Me and my brothers Zahim and Sarim always comes together. At first I didn’t noticed it but everyday same thing make me think that he is doing this on purpose. But as I say whatever he do, doesn’t going to make any difference in me, I will remain the same moody girl busy with my books who don’t believe in love at this stage of life at all. This thing happened daily but if I go and talk to him about this would definitely make him think that I noticed his silly mischief and I would also give him the chance to say something to me which is not official up till now. Few weeks passed but he didn’t get the reaction from my side.

Sarim was in kinder garten at that time and in the lunch time I always went to him to have lunch together. Co-incidentally Arif’s brother was also in Sarim’s class but I never saw Arif coming to him to have lunch or anything. But one day I went to Sarim’s classroom in the lunch break and what I saw was rather shocking, Mr. Arif was already present there and eating his brother’s lunch because his own Tiffin box gets empty in the first lecture itself. But without paying any heed to him I simply went to Sarim and after finishing the lunch I immediately went back to my classroom. I pretend as if he was an invisible guy and I didn’t see him there. But the next day when I went to Sarim in the break, Arif himself took the initiative and said

“Hi, is he your brother?” looking towards Sarim he said.

“Nope, he is my sister” I said without any expression. I know there was no humor in it and it rather sounds rude but I don’t know why I didn’t want to talk to him because I know what was going on in his mind. But his reply was epic.

“Hahaha, you have really got a good sense of humor” he said trying to involve me in the conversation.

“Really? Well thank you” I said in a condescending tone.

“He is my brother Kaif” he said introducing his brother.

I just simply looked at his brother and smiled.

Now it becomes his daily routine to say Hi and hello either in the morning at the school gate or in the lunch time when I went to Sarim and I have to reply his Hi and Hello as it seems weird if I don't do that. By now I had the idea that he likes me but he never ever confessed that to me, so I don't have any reason to be rude to him. But still I never talked with him the way I talk to rest of my class mates.

I always used to sit on the first bench and one day when I entered the classroom I saw Arif changed his seat from the extreme last to the first bench of my adjacent row. I know he did that purposely so that he can have a better view of me from now on. Zunish smiled looking at me and gestured through her eyes, telling me about the seat change of Arif. I just simply said "So?"

"Why are you behaving so rude?" she said after getting irritated with my same moody replies every time.

"I have told you I don't care if he likes me, I don't want to get in any of these sorts of relationships, at least not now. My values are more important to me more than anything" I said.

"But at least you can talk to him nicely. You always behave weird with him" she said.

I know that Zunish was right as I never ever talked with him even with a smile. While he was very generous and polite every time he talks with me. He always tries to make me laugh but he failed hilariously every time. I never considered him to be that important ever. But if he hadn't have those feelings for me, we would definitely be very good friends.

One day Kabir came to me who is one of our mutual friends and told me something which was under the blanket up till now.

"Rifa there is a news for you" he said and grinned.

"Good or bad" I said in a monotonous voice.

"Stupid if I am smiling it must be good then" he said.

"Ok tell then" I said.

"There is someone in the class who has a crush on you" he said.

"AriP" I said.

"Heyy how you know this?" he asked surprisingly.

"Did he himself told you or this is your thought?" I asked.

"No he told me yesterday when we were heading home and he even asks me if I could tell it to you" he said.

"Then Mr. Kabir kindly forwards my message to him as well. I am not interested in him at all. I am not the type of girl who gets carried away by a guy with good looks. My values and ethics are much more important for me then anything" I said and left the conversation immediately.

This thing seriously pissed me off. I was not at all in a mood to talk to anyone and when I was leaving the classroom I saw Arif coming towards me and he said "Hi Rifa".

Without uttering a single word I just gave him a disgusted look and left.

The very next day a big surprise was waiting for me in the school. When I was attending the assembly I noticed that there were no eyes ogling me this morning. I scanned the whole row but I didn't see him. I thought Kabir must have told him and that's why Arif is standing somewhere else. After that when I entered the classroom I saw that his seat was also vacant and that's when Kabir came to me and told

"There's good news for you Miss Rifa".

"What?" I asked.

"Yesterday when we were playing in the dispersal, Arif slipped from the desk and broke his arm. He had a plaster and he will not be able to attend the school for few days" he said.

"I don't care" I said and went to my seat but at time I was actually feeling good. I was already very angry on him and this was the much needed break for him. At least I will not see his face for few days and this thought was the reason for my smile which remained throughout the day on my face.

And like every good thing came to an end and so was my happiness, within one week Arif was back in school. He still had the plaster in his left hand. His friends make a circle around him and asking about his injury. As he was absent the whole week so his work was incomplete, so he went to Rashid sir and asked him to take someone's notebook and give that to him so that he can complete his work.

"Rifa, help Arif. Lend him your notebooks so that he can complete his work" he said after taking the attendance of our class.

"What the hell is this? Why it is me every time?" I said in a very low tone which was audible to Zunish only.

"You are the class topper sweetheart, I guess you have forgotten" she said with a smile.

It was recess and I was with Aditi at that time when Arif came to me.

"Can you me your notebooks?" he said politely.

"Which ones you wanted?" I asked and this time I was polite as well as I have no other option then lending him my notebooks.

"I want History, English and Maths, rest of the works I will complete later" he said.

"Ok, here they are, but remember I want them in same condition and don't you dare forget them at home tomorrow" I said.

Next day he came in the morning and returned me the notebooks.

"All completed?" I asked.

"Yes, Mom helped me" he said.

"How is your hand now?" I asked and even today I don't have any idea why the hell I asked this, because this single sentence changed so many things. He thought that this was the signal of friendship from my side but I have no idea about this.

“Now, it will be fine” he said with a grinning face.

“What?” I asked with a perplexed look.

“Nothing” he said and went away with a big smile on his face.

And from that day my life changed miserably. Every time I was in class he was continuously watching me without any fear of me knowing this. Most of time he did stupid activities like whenever I am laughing he started laughing too without any reason. Repeating the same gestures I am doing like if I’m looking somewhere he started looking there only, if I’m speaking something then speaking the same words. All this became the daily routine and every time he tried to make me smile but he failed miserably every time. He was getting on my nerves and I can’t bare him a single second but every time he behave as if we are best of friends.

Our exams were about to start from next week and this time I was eagerly waiting for the vacations more than the exams as I will get rid of him and his non sense which is happening daily. His extra sweetness was not at all bearable for me. I want some peace and in vacations I can get that. I planned my vacation with my cousin in the village.

Exams get over and on the very last day of exam Arif came to me to bid good bye.

“Bye Rifa, have fun in the vacations” he said with a smile. I don’t know what he was thinking as if he wouldn’t say it I won’t have fun.

“Hmm bbye. You too” I said and faked a smile. With a sigh of relief I left for my home and finally he was not visible. After some days I went to Chiroli a small village situated on the periphery of Delhi and I don’t think there is any better place than this if someone wanted to get some peace from the hectic daily routine of city life.

3

As the duration of vacation was decreasing, the tension of tolerating Arif again, increasing. I was just wishing that he just left the school and go somewhere else. I can't tolerate him anymore. But who knows destiny had its own plans for us. Who knows that the guy whom I hate to such extent that I don't even want to see his face will have another side of him too the caring one but I am not saying that he wasn't annoying, he was. May be I have assumed things to a bit far level which I shouldn't have done. I never knew that one sentence of mine has the tendency to change someone and the guy who was getting on my nerves change like this, I never ever imagined. I still thought why I haven't done that before? May be then I don't have to bear that annoying things he did to make me laugh. But I am glad that I didn't do that before at least that showed me one more side of that guy. His annoying habits which I hated the most at that time but bring the tears of joy today. I just wish I could tell him all this. But if everything happens as per your wish it's good and if it hasn't happened according to your wish than its rather better because then its God's will.

Results were out and this time I am not going to tell you that who was the first rank holder because I know you will definitely kill me this time.

On the very first day Kabir came to me and said "Congrats Miss Padaku" with a smile.

"Thankyou" I said with a blush.

"Arif's result is miserable, he passed with a grace this time" he said.

"Ask him to focus more on studies than girls" I said.

"Ohho! Miss Padaku showing concern for Arif" he said and grinned.

"Excuse me this is just an advice and don't you dare tell him that I said so otherwise he is best in assuming things" I said in a condescending tone.

"Hufffff, ok your highness" he said taking a bow and left and left a smile on our faces.

Anil sir was our new class teacher and he was the one of the strictest teacher of our school. He entered the classroom and there was a pin drop silence in the class. Students don't even murmur in his class and we have to bear him for one complete year and everyone was like why don't he just die. For boys he was like an enemy and he will take all the revenge of his childhood from them only. He was a bit lenient with girls but only a bit.

He started calling out names of all the students for the attendance and after taking attendance he announced "Rifa will be the class monitor and she will take care of the class in teacher's absence".

I was like WTF man I don't want to be the class monitor. There's a phrase which says 'With Great Powers Comes Great Responsibility' and I would like to add a bit to it 'And Responsibility Comes with Headache'. Yeah this is the fact. But for the formality I had to stand up and say thank you.

"Thank you Sir" I said with a big fake smile from my seat only.

I never thought that my life would become such a hell after being the class monitor and especially because of him. This was the time when he started thinking of me as a friend while I didn't. His habit of repeating the

same gestures I am doing hasn't changed it rather get increased. Every time we were in the playground he follows me, whenever I am in the canteen he was there and following me to Sarim's class was continued since last year. I don't know why he was after me only, even though he didn't get any green signal from my side.

Soon after the school was opened we have our Independence Day next month and it was celebrated every year in our school. We have short plays, debates, singing and dancing program and many other competitions along with flag hosting ceremony. Preparations were made for the programs. Everyone was very excited as the number of classes happening decreased as both teachers as well as students were busy preparing for their program. I have taken part in the group dancing and we have to dance on "Ye Desh hai veer jawano ka". Zunish was also there with me in the dancing.

15th august was near and our dresses for the programs were ready. It was long plain white kurta with tri-color chunni. But the day before Independence Day when we have to do the practice with the dresses, our dance teacher was distributing us our kurtas, but then we found that my kurta was missing. She misplaced it somewhere and to make a new was impossible as just one day was left for the program. She asked from all the dance participants if they could arrange a white kurta but none of us have it, but suddenly a voice came from a group of students who were watching us practicing.

"Mam I have a white, would you like me to bring it?" Arif said with a proud voice as if he was waiting for this moment only.

"Yes yes Arif why not, do bring it tomorrow" Mam said with a sigh and his face become pink with the blood rush which was clearly visible on his skin.

Wait! Why the hell it didn't strike me ever before, there is high probability that he must have stolen that kurta just to come in limelight next time when we meet I'll definitely going to ask this from him. But I know that this 'next time' will never come.

The day came for which we all were preparing for, everyone was busy getting ready but I was waiting for that asshole who was late that day. Arre if you like me then this was the first chance so that you can do something for me and in the very first chance you are late. I was sitting like a stupid in the dressing room while everyone was ready with their attires. I was just checking the clock again and again but that useless was nowhere to be seen. Finally that fellow came with the poly bag in his hand.

"Here's your kurta Rifa" he said.

"Oh! I am so grateful to you, don't you think you came too early" I said with a grimacing smile.

"Actually I was..." he said but before he completes his sentence I said "I am already late don't waste my time" and rushed to change the dress.

I was ready and for our performance only a short time left. The kurta was a bit loose but it can be used for the performance. Finally the name of our group was announced and we all were on the stage. Before the song starts I looked in the audience there was much crowd but co-incidentally my eyes struck on Arif who was continuously looking at me without even blinking his eyes. But I as usual ignored him and prepared myself for the dance. Song gets started and all of us completely rocked. After the completion of our performance we went back to the dressing room. Aditi and Soumya rushed to us and both of them were very happy.

“Your group was mind blowing, everyone was hooting for you guys” Aditi said with a twinge.

“Except for the one who was cheering for one and only Miss Rifa” Soumya added.

“Who, Arif?” Zunish blurted.

“Obviously Arif, who else would do that” Soumya said with a smirk.

“Excuse me, what do you mean by who else would do that, am I that bad a performer?” I said in a fun way.

“No sweetheart but Arif won’t let, anyone do that” she said blinking her eyes.

“Oh come on just change this shitty topic” I said making a face but then I realized that I have to return his Kurta which I borrowed.

“I have to return his kurta, I’ll catch you guys later, bye” I said while leaving the conversation in middle.

“Ohho! Miss Rifa wanted to hang out with Arif, there is something up guys” Soumya said and everyone started laughing hilariously.

“Bitch” I said with a smile and left the room.

I have searched him in the whole school but he was nowhere to be seen. I was seriously pissed off at that time and when I was coming back to dressing room I noticed that he was roaming in the corridor along with Kabir and two other friends of him. When he saw me approaching he started walking too towards me and what a friend Kabir was, hats off to you man, he stopped the other two friends in the mid way only and took them out of our sight. These boys and their logic of ‘Teri Bhabhi hai’ are unbelievable. I mean I really appreciate this bonding which guys share amongst them which is hardly present there in girls.

“Where were you? I was looking for you in the whole school?” I said in frustration.

“Really?” he said with a huge smile on his face.

“Your kurta” I said handing him the poly bag.

“Oh! By the way your performance was mind blowing” he said.

“Hmm, I know” I said and started walking towards the dressing room again, he wanted to say something but I pretend I didn’t noticed. I know I again behaved weird. I could have thanked him at least.

Days were passing and his stupid habits were kept on growing, talking unnecessarily with me, cracking stupid jokes many more new things. But Alas! My response was same as usual. One more new thing which he started was borrowing my notebooks for home making silly excuses that his work is incomplete while he just wanted a chance to have a talk with me. But I never refused him to give my notebook. Every time he asked for the notebooks every time I gave him, I don’t know why, may be because I owe him this as he lends me his kurta but I still don’t have any idea whether that was the actual reason.

His favorite job was to tease me whenever I am on the monitor duty in the teacher’s absence. He used to talk a lot in the class so that I could give him the punishment and make him stand in front of the whole class. He himself wanted to make fun of himself. I don’t know how punishment could give pleasure to anyone, I have

no idea. Another unusual thing which started happening was those blank calls on my landline number. In the starting I didn't have any clue that who was making these calls, but later on I understand that it must be Arif only. But he hasn't approached me yet about his feelings for me so that I could directly ask him why he is doing all this crap and secondly I wasn't sure that it was Arif who was making these blank calls. So basically I don't have the proof against him.

One day I remember I was sitting in my balcony doing nothing but enjoying the weather. It was completely dark and cloudy. The winds were at its peak. The roads were visible from my house. The traffic was increasing at a better speed as everyone was in a rush to reach their home as it could rain any moment and then suddenly the door bell rang.

"Rifa, go and check who is on the door" mom shouted from the kitchen.

"Mummy I am upstairs, please you go and check" I replied from the balcony.

After that I again lost in the weather as it was awesome. And within a minute she again shouted "Rifa, come down! Your friend is here."

"My friend! Who has come at this time?" I thought and walked down the stairs.

When I reached at the gate what I saw was really disturbing. Mr. Arif has reached to my house now.

"Hi" he said smiling.

"Hello" I replied.

"Actually I came to return your notebook" he said while giving it back to me.

"You could have given this to me tomorrow as well" I said.

"I have to attend my cousin's marriage so I might not come tomorrow. I thought you will need this and if I didn't give you this today you won't lend it ever again" he said with a witty smile. Well one thing which I never admitted, let me say it today, he was cute, damn cute he was and that witty smile can make any girl fall for him. I would rather say it could make any guy fall for him as well. Well jokes apart, I didn't find his smile attractive that day.

"Ok. I think you need to go now rain might start any time" I said looking at the sky.

"Hmm, ok bbye" he said.

"Bye" I said and he left for his house.

The day after tomorrow he came to me just to have a talk.

"Hi Rifa" he said.

"Hi, how was the marriage" I asked just because Zunish was sitting next to me and she knew what had happened and I also don't want to behave weird this time.

"It was boring, I missed school" he said.

“He missed you” Zunish said in an inaudible tone but my ears were capable enough to hear this. I gave a deadly look to Zunish “Girl you’re gone this time” I said with eyes only.

“Hey tell me one thing, how do you know the address of my house?” I asked.

“Mmmm,,,uu,,,,aff...Hey your mom is really cute” he said mumbling with words.

“What?” I said with a shocking experience.

“I got to go, catch you guys later” he said and rushed immediately.

“Hahahaha he isn’t interested in you, he is interested in your mom, hahahaha” Zunish said laughing like an idiot.

“Shut up bitch” I said punching her.

I remember few days later we are going to have drawing competition where we have to draw something with paper cutting and tooth brush. We have to cut a design on the paper and then spray the color with the help of toothbrush which makes a design on the drawing sheet. I was not interested in the drawing at that time so chose not to take part in the competition. Neither did Zunish take the part in that competition. So both of us free that day and we were helping Aditi and Soumya. Zunish left for the washroom and that gossip queen returns with the gossip.

“Guys listen, guess who else take part in the competition” Zunish asked in excitement.

“Who?” I asked.

“Your Romeo” she said and everyone started laughing.

“And guess what he has drawn?” she asked mysteriously.

“What?” we asked together with curiosity.

“The letter R” Zunish said and started laughing like an idiot and Soumya and Aditi too joined her. I was like WTF man, just grow up.

Then they decided to have a look at his drawing and they even dragged me with them. When we reached their, we saw Arif was completely lost in that drawing and for the first time I saw him doing something with such dedication. A teacher came to him to see what he has drawn.

“What is this R?” the teacher asked with curiosity.

“Mam this is all I have” he said with such a proud as if he was going to win that competition.

And when the teacher was watching it we also got the chance to have a look at that drawing and the first thing after watching it which came out of my mouth was “He is insane” I said with a smile.

Although in he had lost in the competition but he won in my subconscious.

Few days later it was Rose day in the February when he came to me with a rose. It wasn’t red though, but when he gave me I was not in a mood to accept that.

He just simply came to me and offered that rose.

“What is this?” I said in shocked.

“ummm Rose I guess” he uttered.

“No way! I’m not taking it” I said completely rejecting his flower.

“Arre as a friend I’m giving” he said with a bit of disappointment.

Zunish gave me a deadly look as if I do not accept that rose she would definitely roast me alive and serve him and then I thought that the guy is asking for a friendship and he is not that bad too so I accept that flower making a face as I don’t have any other option. So basically now he got the license to talk to me as a friend although he has been doing the same since so long.

It was just 2 months left for our exam when some unacceptable thing happened. Our mathematics teacher was absent and I was monitoring the class. The class was not at all in a mood to keep their mouth shut and I was pissed because they were not listening to me. Even the punishment was not making any difference. I was just shouting again and again but they none of them were ready to listen and as I told you Arif’s favorite job was to tease me especially when I am on the duty. That day I have given punishment to 4 boys who were still busy in talking and then I realized that it was Arif who was provoking them to do this so that I got frustrated. I gave him a look with my eyes like “dude, you are going die” and what he did in return was not at all tolerable. He made some gestures with his hands, at first I didn’t understand them but later on I realized he said “I Love You”. This time my anger reach to its peak but I pretended as if I didn’t get this but I have to do something at that moment.

“Arif get up and stand over here” I said giving him the punishment with full anger.

He got up from his seat but that shameless fellow was still smiling. I just gave him a disgusted look and started shouting on the girls who were continuously busy in talking as if they have had their first make out with their boyfriends last night and they were comparing who last the longest.

When I turned back I saw Arif was saying something to his other fellows who were also enjoying the punishment with him. But the whole class was on my head, they were not listening to me at all, may they have planned that they will do this.

“Keep quiet” I shouted in the class and what happened after that was hilarious Arif and his gang who were there in the punishment ran out of the class and all the other students of the class started hooting and laughing and suddenly a teacher from the other class came to check what is happening here.

“What happened?” he shouted and all the class becomes silent within a fraction of second.

“Why are making so much of noise? Where is your monitor?” he shouted again.

“Sirr.. me” I tried to say but before I could complete my sentence he started shouting on me.

“Rifa you, I didn’t expected this from you, you can’t handle your class” he said.

“Siirr I was...” I again tried to say something but he again interrupted me.

“And who were those boys who were running in the corridor” he said.

This time I didn't even try to say something because I know he will again stop me in the mid way. After that the time for the period gets over and our Social Studies' teacher arrived. The Ronit sir who was shouting on me left our class handling it to Sahiba Mam.

At that time I was feeling humiliated, insulted and I was completely filled with anger and if I see Arif that time I would have definitely punch him so hard in his face that he will think twice before doing this with anyone. Later that day my anger was long gone when I was sitting alone. All the other students were busy playing in the playground but I was enjoying the rainbow which was visible after the drizzling in the morning. The weather was absolutely perfect for any romantic scene to take place and maybe that's what he thought as well.

I saw Arif coming towards me and he was a bit nervous but he somehow gathered some courage and uttered “Hi Rifa” with a little bit of stammering. I thought he had come to say sorry for the morning scene but my mood was completely fine till that time or you can say I was not in a mood to punch someone.

“Hi” I said with a smile.

“I want to say something” he said.

“Hmm” I said.

“Actually I want to give you this” he said taking a ring out of his pocket and giving it to me. I still remembered his face at that time. His eyes were trying to find something on the ground, his hands were shivering and his face turned completely pink. I know the proposal could be much better than this but let me tell you if you have forgotten, this is the proposal of 8th standard guy back in 2003. Any girl would say Yes when such a good looking guy proposing you when you are in your best of mood and the moment was absolutely perfect, the sun was peeping through clouds, a cool breeze was blowing and a rainbow was there on your head so I don't think it could be better than this at that time. But like Zunish always says that I am not a girl and I would rather be declared an alien and that's how I reacted actually.

“What is this?” I said with an angry and disgusted face.

“Rifa, I like you” he said and he instantly closed his eyes so tightly maybe because he was expecting a tight slap from me. But come on how I could slap a guy who has been my friend from few days. But finally this guy has admitted his likeness for me and the things which I always wanted say whenever he pissed me off now ultimately came out of mouth.

“What the hell you think of yourself dude, just because I accepted your rose I will accept this as well, No, I am not the kind of girl who wears her heart on her sleeve. I am not the kind of girl who gets carried away by a guy with good looks who is surrounded by girls all the time. And what rubbish is this you like me, you guys are not even worthy of friendship dude. You don't deserve a girl who could remain just friend with you. And there are many sluts roaming in the school go and ask them they will happily accept your proposal” I said in one breath and that poor fellow's eyes were still closed. After saying this I turned around and started to move to the classroom and then I heard something

“I want you not anyone else” he said in extremely low tone but as I got alien ears I heard this.

“Whatever” I said and moved further. Anyone could easily see the disappointment on his face, from absolute pink it changed to pale yellow. Ours mood gets fucked up, weather was not pleasant anymore, the very same sun seems scorching now and that the rainbow vanished.

When I was about to enter the corridor I looked back at Arif who was still in the ground looking at that ring and then what I saw was something unexpected, he just throw that ring so hard that it went out of the school.

“I don’t care” I said and moved inside the corridor.

4

All what had happen between me Arif, I chose not to tell about that to anyone, not even to Zunish. Next day when we went to school Arif came and sat on the same seat on which he was sitting for the last two years which was my adjacent one, but today neither he said hi to me nor did he look at me even once. When we went to the assembly he stands in the extreme last position of the queue while he always stand beside me. I was noticing all this. After the assembly gets over we went back to our classrooms, Zunish and me were discussing about which stream to pick in the next year as that time we had to choose our streams in 9th standard only and our exams were just one month later. When the two of us were talking Arif came to our seat, he had my notebook in his hand which he borrowed from me few days back. He just simply came to our seat and put the notebook on the desk. I looked at him but his eyes didn't make any contact with anyone of us.

"Thank you" he said in a very low voice and went back to his seat.

"What happened to him?" Zunish asked.

"Who cares?" I said with not at all caring look.

"Totally inhuman" she said with a disgusted look.

This time I didn't bothered what is she thinking of me right now and I get busy with my bag.

Next day when I came to school same thing happened, Arif didn't talk to me and it doesn't make any difference to me. Neither did I try to say Hi to him nor him. Later on that day when the lunch break was over I found that my Mathematics notebook was missing. I checked my bag fifteen times but all in vein. I was very strong girl, hardly anything could make me cry but this was something which I couldn't handle and I started crying like a baby does when his or her mother wasn't around. Zunish was continuously consoling me but our exams were just within a month and the thought of not clearing them was eating me up. When I was sopping Arif entered into the classroom and this was the first time our eyes met after that incident. But he immediately turned his eyes, although he has seen me crying but he didn't come to me. He rather went to Kabir and asked him "What happened to her why is she crying?"

"Her mathematics notebook is missing" Kabir said.

Without even speaking a single word he went to the first seat and started checking the bags of boys without even asking them. I was watching that whole scenario.

"Me and Zunish have already checked everyone's bag" Kabir said.

But he didn't pay any heed to what Kabir was saying and kept on checking everyone's bag again. He seemed rather more tensed and concern than me about my notebook. Although he didn't talk to me the whole time but I was continuously watching him doing all this just for my notebook. After a long CID like search even he was unable to find the notebook.

When he didn't find anything he went to Kabir and said "Ask her that we will help her making a new notebook."

Kabir came to me and said “Don’t worry Rifa we’ll help you and we make a new notebook.”

“No I’ll manage” I said while sobbing. Arif was listening our conversation and continuously staring me from the corner of his eyes. But when I say No, he immediately went back to his seat without even listening my further sentence.

When I went back to my house, I found my notebook on my study table and at that moment I felt like slapping myself so hard that why the hell I started crying when I could have checked it here at least once. But what so ever I have found it and I don’t have to do the same work again and that is to be from someone else’s notebook and Rifa doesn’t do that.

I haven’t told anyone that I found my lost notebook from my home only otherwise half of them would make fun of me and the other half would roast me first and then eat me up. I kept my mouth shut and pretend as if I haven’t found it and I’ll make a new notebook. But one new thing started from Arif’s side that day. As the year was about to end and the entire teachers were busy checking our notebooks in the class in spite of teaching us because our course syllabus was already completed. Arif used to sit on the front seat and that is to be the exactly opposite of teacher’s table. So whenever a teacher is checking my notebook his eyes were continuously watching it and as soon as the teacher checked it, he just picked it up and came to my seat to give it to me. This thing happen a number of times, for almost each and every notebook that has been checked that week, he repeat the same gesture.

Every time he came to my seat to hand it over to me, I looked at him but none of the time he makes an eye contact with me, never ever. He always just ran away after handing the notebook to me, many times I tried to say Thanks but before I could say anything he just always left. I was feeling a bit guilty that time that this guy is caring so much just for me and we are not talking though.

Anyone can see the drastic change in Arif’s behavior, he wasn’t that chirpy anymore, not playing with his friends the way he used to play, not smiling anymore and more importantly he stopped watching me all the time. I don’t know whether I liked that or not but maybe I also got used to of his stupidity and that sudden change in him was not at all likeable.

“Is something happened between the two of you” Zunish asked curiously.

“What? Nnn.. No...nothing...nothing had happened? Why?” I stammered and started looking here and there.

“Just curiosity” she said with a sigh and making a face.

Come on Yaaarr, we are my best friend since the time we entered the school, and I believe our best friends know us way more better then we know ourselves and that’s why she immediately guessed that I’m hiding something and not interested to share it with her. So I chose to tell it to her.

“Actually Zunish, something had happened between the two of us” I said making a sorry face.

“Oh! Really, But why are you telling it to me, who am I?” she said more than politely which obviously means she got angry.

“Just shut up! I don’t have time for this shit. Listen to me now” I said and started telling her the whole incident what had happened between the two of us to each and every detail.

After narrating the whole story to her what comes out of her mouth was “Oh!”

“Like seriously, you have this to say after all this crap. Oh!” I said angrily.

“Look sweetheart, you are smart enough to know what is good for you and I guess that’s why you behaved like this with him while you could have simply said No rather than ruining your friendship to such level. And I don’t think that guy did something wrong, if he has feeling for you, he expressed it, that’s it. Whatever he ever did was just to bring a spark of smile on your ‘All the Time Rude Face’ in which he always failed but he never stopped trying just because you are not smiling. He kept putting his all efforts so that you could laugh on his jokes so that you could talk to him at least once” she said while I was sitting like a statue and listening everything.

I didn’t want to say a single word after that, I kept my mouth shut. This thing sort of disturbed me in a way which even I don’t know about. I tried to make myself busy in some or the other cores but every time his face was coming in front of me. It wasn’t like I started loving him but I just wanted to apologize for my rude behavior which I showed that day. But every day whenever I tried to go towards him, he avoids me and even I didn’t make any extra efforts to go closer.

One day I remember, it was the day which completely changes my perspective about that guy or you can say, his that gesture made me fall for him. For the first time the bell in my head rang, for the first time butterflies tickles in my stomach and for the first time I didn’t kept my eyes off from that guy. He completely won me that day.

It was the when the whole class came back to the classroom from the play ground. Everyone was tired as they were playing. Everyone was standing here and there in the class, busy with their talks. I was standing alone and trying to clear the sweat from my face with my handkerchief when my eyes met Arif’s. He sort of gestured me to keep the stare towards him for a moment. I didn’t get anything so I just raised my eyebrow to know what he is trying to say. He took his right and move it closer to his left shoulder and tried to adjust his shirt with that and he wanted me to do the same with my kameez. When I looked at my shoulder what I saw was really embarrassing for me. My bra strap was visible from there, so I immediately get aside and adjusted it and when I took a turn I saw that a bunch of boys was staring me all through and giggling. That gesture of him was absolutely heart melting, I looked at him again to say thanks but he gets busy with his work by that moment. I still believe that Arif had the guts to go to those guys and punch them hard in their faces but he didn’t do anything like just because of me. I knew doing something like this would create a scene and to all those who don’t know what had happen would get a topic of discussion for the next few days. That was something only a gentleman can do. That was moment when I wanted to stare him too, that was the gesture which actually brought a smile on my face. That whole day he kept revolving in my mind, even when I was back home he didn’t left my mind.

From next day we have our schools off for three days and after that we will be having our exams started so I didn’t get time to go to him and apologize for my behavior. So basically I have to wait for another three days to go and meet him otherwise after the exams we will be having our summer vacations.

“I said Ok, let’s wait now and hope that he will forgive me” I said to myself lying on the bed before falling asleep.

Exams get started I get busy with my studies, I do wanted to apologize from him but he was nowhere to be seen. Both of us had our seats in different classrooms, so we hardly have a chance to talk. After the exam

whenever I went to him he was always surrounded with his friends while I wanted to have a talk alone. So days were passing and I didn't talk to him yet. It was the day before the last exam when I decided no matter what I will definitely going to him and apologize whether his friends are there or anyone. It was my fault and I'll correct it my way.

When I was writing my exam I was eagerly waiting it to get completed soon but that exam was really lengthy and I gave my sheet only when the last bell to submit the answer sheet rang. I immediately rushed outside to find him. I searched him everywhere but I didn't get any clue where he is. I saw Kabir and rest of his group standing under a tree and having fun. My eyes were searching Arif only but he wasn't there. Kabir saw me watching them so he came to me and ask "What happened?"

"No I was just looking for Arif, where is he?" I asked.

"His Dad came, so just left after finishing his exam" he said.

"Oh! Thanks" I said and left.

I was a bit disappointed with myself as it was the last day when I could have talked to him before the summer break starts. But as I said before if everything happens as per your wish it's good and if it hasn't happened according to your wish than its rather better because this is something God wanted to happen.

Vacations get started and this time I was at home rather than spending it at my grandparent's house. There was not even a single day spent when I didn't miss Arif. I don't know whether I was missing his behavior or the chance to apologize but whenever he comes in my mind I always tried to make myself busy in some or the other work.

One fine day when he was not ready to leave my mind I took my school bag and take out all the books and notebooks from it. When I was taking out the books my eyes got struck on the notebook which Arif had borrowed me for the last time and returned the day after I shouted at him. I started looking at that notebook and started turning its pages. Mr. Arif again hijacked my brain and he has all the control of my mind now. When I was about to close that notebook I saw that something was written on the last page which I haven't written. It was not my writing. I started reading it

Kabhi khamosh baithoge kabhi kuchh gungunaoge

Mein utna yaad aaunga jitna mujhe bhulaoge

Koi jab puchh baithega khamoshi ka sabab tumse

Bhut samjhana chahoge magar samjha na paoge

Kabhi duniya mukammal bankar aayegi nigahon me

Kabhi meri kami duniya ki har sheh me paoge

Kahi pr bhi rhe hum tum, Mohabbat phir mohabbat hai

Tumhe hum yaad aayenge hume tum yaad aaoge

Kabhi khamosh baithoge kabhi kuchh gungunaoge

Tumhe hum yaad aayenge hume tum yaad aaoge

I still have no idea whether these were his lines or copied from somewhere else but when I read those lines they got printed on my mind like they will never ever leave their mark that's why I still remember those lines and whenever I miss him these lines are the very first thing which comes in my mind. This was the day when I myself accepted the fact that yes I am in love, I have fallen for someone actually, which I never imagined that a girl like me could fall for someone.

Now I was eagerly waiting my holidays to get over. This was the first time when I was not enjoying my holidays and this was the first time when I was happy that school was about to open in few days.