



The lost Ring

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The Lost Ring

The rain came without warning, splashing across the crowded streets of Mumbai. Ananya pulled her dupatta over her head and ran, clutching her handbag. Inside, wrapped in tissue paper, was her engagement ring — the one she had never worn.

Two years ago, Aarav had given it to her. She had said yes, but the wedding never happened. Life had pulled them apart — his job abroad, her father's illness. They hadn't spoken since.

Now, the ring was going back to him. Or so she thought.

As she crossed the street, someone brushed past her. Her bag slipped. She caught it — but the ring tumbled out, rolled across the wet pavement, and disappeared into a storm drain. She froze. A strange emptiness spread in her chest.

“Looking for this?” a voice called. She turned. Aarav stood there, drenched, holding the ring between his fingers.

Her mind reeled. “What... how are you here?”

He smiled faintly. “I came to return this to *you*.”

“What do you mean?”

Aarav's eyes softened. “I sent it to your house last week. You weren't home. I wanted you to have it... not because of the past, but because I never stopped—”

Before he could finish, a woman's voice cut through the rain. "Aarav! Come on, we'll be late!"

Ananya turned. A tall woman with an umbrella stood waiting. Her heart sank. "I see," she said quietly.

Aarav hesitated. "It's not what you think. She's my sister. She wanted to meet you too."

Ananya blinked. "Meet me? Why?"

The woman stepped forward, smiling. "Because my brother is an idiot. He's been in love with you for two years and thought you'd moved on."

The rain kept falling, people hurried past, and the world seemed to narrow to the space between them. Aarav held out the ring again.

"This time," he said, "don't say yes because you feel you should. Say it if you still want me."

Her fingers trembled as she took it. "Yes," she whispered, "because I never stopped wanting you."

And the rain, for once, felt warm.

