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Acknowledgement

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# Prologue

*Some memories are not erased. They just choose to sleep.*

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The clinic was quiet.

Not sterile. Not cold. Just quiet. The kind of quiet that made you question your heartbeat.

Zenia D’Costa sat behind the frosted glass desk, her fingers trembling slightly above the confirmation key. She had done this hundreds of times before. She had helped strangers let go of pain, heartbreak, grief. But never like this.

Not when the man across from her was Aariv Murao.

Not when he said, in that voice she once knew like her own skin:

“There’s this woman... I need to forget her. I don’t remember her name. Or her face. But every time it rains, I feel like I’m losing her all over again.”

Zenia didn’t respond. Her throat was dry.

He didn’t recognize her.

Of course he didn’t. That was the point.

Aariv sat with his palms open, vulnerable, trusting. Trusting *her*, unknowingly, to take away what remained of *them*.

*How do you erase a memory that still aches in your bones?*

*How do you forget the man who remembers everything — except you?*

Outside the window, it began to drizzle. Soft, like a secret.

Zenia pressed the key.

And the screen blinked:

**Session #1472 – Confirmed**

**Subject: A. Murao**

**Target: Emotion-linked memory deletion**

**Keyword trace: 'Zenia' — 0 results found.**

She blinked once, then looked away.

She didn't cry.

Not then.

Not yet.

# Dedication

*To the ones who left without forgetting,  
and to the ones who stayed without  
remembering.*

CHAPTER ONE

# THE MAN WHO DIDN'T REMEMBER HER



# Chapter One

## The Man Who Didn't Remember Her

The rain softened Panaji into a dream. Outside the glass walls of the Mnemosyne Memory Institute — perched quietly on Altinho Hill — the city blurred into watercolour streaks. Palm trees swayed like slow-moving thoughts, and the Mandovi River shimmered under a curtain of monsoon.

Inside the clinic, time moved differently. It was quieter here — reverent, almost. The kind of silence that belonged to places where people came to forget.

Zenia D'Costa stood behind the front desk, her white coat folded neatly over her arm. The name flashing on the appointment screen stilled her breath:

**Aariv Murao** — 11:00 AM

Procedure: *Targeted Memory Erasure*

Her fingers froze mid-air.

Not because of the name. But because of what it meant.

Aariv Murao was here.

At her clinic.

To forget someone.

She hadn't heard his name in five years.

And yet, it still lived inside her like a house never locked.

Sometimes, it knocked at night. Sometimes, it simply stayed.



Zenia exhaled slowly. Her shoes tapped gently on the polished floor as she walked to the consultation chamber — a room painted in soft sea-glass blue, the colour of forgetting.

The door creaked open behind her.

He stepped in.

Tall. Broad-shouldered. Still carrying that quiet intensity like a secret. Same dark eyes. Same slight frown between his brows when he was thinking too much.

Time had carved itself into his jawline, but hadn't touched his voice.

"Hi," he said, like strangers do.

Zenia turned. Her voice didn't shake.

"Hi. Please... have a seat."

He sat. He didn't recognize her.

Of course he didn't.

Because the woman sitting in front of him was the one he had come to forget.

---

She opened his file on the screen. Her fingers hovered just a moment too long.

"So... you're here for selective memory extraction?" she asked gently.

He nodded. "Yeah. There's someone I can't move on from. But I... don't remember who she is."

Zenia blinked once — the only betrayal her body allowed.