



THE ADVENTURE OF THE THREE DAMSELS

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THE ADVENTURE OF THE THREE DAMSELS

“If you dare say anything about my DiCaprio, I’ll pummel you with my fists. He is my first crush and will be one forever,” glared Bindu. Her cute round face, slick eyes and shaped to envy nose looked more than attractive as she stared.

“Nay, nobody can get anywhere close to Brad Pitt. He is the real hero,” countered Priya with her usual charm. Her bubbly demeanour was a sure turn on.

“Fuck you. Wait until Deepu comes. I’ll show you who’s who,” said Bindu.

“Yeah, let her come. I know her tastes,” laughed Priya rocking on the rocky bench in Lalbagh where they were chit-chatting.

“Hell with your tastes. All sour. Get lost!” said Bindu, a bit annoyed.

“DiCaprio’s spicy,” said Priya, giggling. She enjoyed poking her.

Deepu was a drop dead gorgeous girl whose face alone could force nights of sweet insomnia to many guys. Her regular visits to the parlour had made her almost irresistible. Even the most misogynistic of men could get stupefied by her presence.

As she walked towards the girls, the evening breeze and the setting sun had a jaw-dropping impact on almost all the guys around. They could not help but be benumbed.

“She’s here!” exclaimed Priya.

“Who’s spicy, you naughty girl?” asked Deepu, hugging Priya warmly. Moving on to hug Bindu she said “I’ll handle her Bindu, don’t you worry.”

“By the way how is it that day after day you are becoming more and more beautiful? You must be squeezing many a hearts these days,” teased Priya.

A slight tinge of blush ran over Deepu’s cheeks. She looked stunning as she

said ‘shut up Priya!’ bashfully.

“Only I know how many buckets of drool I had to decant during our college days just because I hung around you,” Priya continued.

“Yeah, yeah, as if nobody ever threw a wink at you guys. Bindu had a separate following for herself and you spared no guy, with your boyish charm, having them swarm around you like bees,” defended Deepu causing Bindu to blush.

As the girls were thus chattering, a handsome hunk of a man suddenly came running towards them, catching their attention. Their collective expression suggested they were fairly distracted by his appearance and advance. Evidently, his pace slowed down unconsciously as he looked at them; who wouldn’t, after all!

Then came the surprise!

He just crossed them and went some distance. Even before they realized what was happening, an ordinary unimpressive guy zoomed past them, chasing the handsome one. It created a chill down Deepu’s spine. Priya and Bindu looked equally perplexed.

Elsewhere that morning—

Three other girls were looking very restless. They were talking to each other on something that was really bothering them.

“Dude, I can bear it no more. My head is reeling. I want it right now!” cried Meena.

“Well that idiot has not returned yet. I’m feeling giddy!” said Geetha.

“My nerves are screaming. Where the hell has he gone? I am going to kill that fucker!” yelled Sheetal.

“Meena! Geetha! Sheetal! Leave your empty tiffin boxes right there and run back to the classroom. Princi’s goina be here anytime now,” hollered out Prashant as he came running towards them.

“Lady Hitler has a fuckin needle sharp nose. It was hard to escape her eyes. Had I not escaped, I would have almost been trapped to death under her

armpit,” continued Prashant imagining himself under her right arm. ‘Frightening!!’ he thought. He saw her casting a doubtful eyes on him while he was entering the college gate. Perhaps, his restlessness would have signalled some mischief to her.

His announcement scared the hell out of the girls. They left their empty boxes on the long park bench in front of the Head office, which was some distance away from their classroom. Running, they warned him to deliver the boxes with stuff in less than twenty minutes. Their nerves wouldn’t listen to them beyond that point.

Outside their college in Bangalore, one of the city’s most prestigious educational institutions, a sign board warned “Sale of cigarettes or any kind of intoxicating substance is a punishable offense.” Yeah, as if it acted an un-uniformed security guard. Even the crows and pigeons gave it a damn. It was often their unpaid restroom.

In the evening -

“Where is Prashant humping since morning? Hell! I have emptied my stock!” cried Sheetal.

“So have I,” added Meena, a bit jittery herself. “I heard guys get supplies from the tea vendor outside our campus. He mans a push cart from 10 AM to 10 PM opposite our college gate. But he serves dope only on Thursdays and Fridays. Luckily, it’s a Friday today.”

“The code word is ‘stuff’,” said Geetha. “But I don’t know how any of us could dare go to him for a dope, even though it’s a Friday. I heard he is a man of loose morals.”

“We are three of us! Don’t you worry,” reassured Sheetal.

“What if there are other rogues out there and how embarrassing would it be if we got noticed going to him!?” lamented Geetha.

“Well my head is begging for relief. I don’t care a hoot. I want a snuff right now! Come let’s go!” urged Sheetal.

All three went to the tea shop. The tea vendor looked puzzled at their advent. As they came closer he slowly realized from their expressions as to what they were up to.

He was over thirty years of age with an average build and sleazy eyes. His

was a face which could scare even a crying infant to an abrupt quietude.

The girls came to him, but were feeling uncomfortable and didn't know how to open up the matter.

"How many?" he said plainly.

"For a week, at least, a gram a day. Give us 21 in total," replied Sheetal while others were slightly hesitant.

"You snuff more than one a day, you go straight up there to heaven," warned he, pointing his fore finger towards the sky. "You won't see it here anymore."

"We'll manage it. Tell us how much!" urged Sheetal.

He realized their helplessness. This looked like an opportunity for him. He felt gripped by lust. He was a bit distracted by Meena. Her curves seemed to block his senses. His slanderous eyes had his hormones continually jumping, wobbling his mental equilibrium.

He said "It's tight out here. There is a suspicious eye or two around. Why don't one of you come aside to get what you want?" he said. "Why don't you come aside with me," said he, addressing Meena.

The atmosphere was a bit tense and danged. They didn't know what to do. Yet, every passing moment was literally killing them. Meena went with him as the others waited, a bit restlessly.

They both went into a narrow, empty lane adjacent to the shop and walked some distance. They were out of sight from the rest. The moment was fast approaching. He started trembling, not out of fear! She was already trembling, neither out of fear nor lust. She pleaded him to give her the stuff. He saw that the moment was opportune.

He said "One kiss a gram," wickedly.

She was Shell shocked. "What did you just say?" she said gaping.

"Either you give it or take both from me," he said, getting closer to her.

"You bastard!" screamed Meena.

"It's your choice. Take both or take one. I don't see you taking none. There's no one apart from us here," he threatened, drawing forward.

She felt too numb to even react. She didn't know whether to cry for help or resist. Her nerves were weakening her resilience. She didn't know what to do. He reduced her proximity to a few inches and breathed ounces of lust. She got pushed to the wall by his advances. His eyes scanned every bit of her. It was getting more and more intense. She was scared but felt helpless. He looked at her red lips. He felt maddened. He wanted it all for himself. He drew his lips close to hers!

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Priya gathered herself and said “girls it's action time.”

“Deepu you take this key and get my car to the spot where we nab the goon. You know where the car is right?” she instructed.

“Nab the goon!?” screamed the other two in the same breath.

“There's little time to lose. Come on girls, let's do it. We can do better than just bewitching. They have gone some distance away,” she continued.

“Bindu, start your bike!”

“Trace us down there Deepu. I'll call you if we succeed before you spot us. Don't ask questions now. Just start.”

Deepu and Bindu got super excited about the adventure that was about to unfold.

Deepu ran towards Priya's car parked in the parking lot, still contemplating what had just happened. She knew where to go now.

Bindu hurriedly started her Bike. Priya jumped on to the pillion seat swiftly and they both headed in the direction where the goon went chasing the handsome guy. Bindu was known for her impressive driving skills. Despite that, it took a while before they could actually locate the street where the chase was still going on.

Both men seemed to be running out of gas. They had reached a broad main road after covering a bunch of gullies and lanes.

“Hurry up Bindu! Hurry up! We are not sure if he has any weapon with him. He looked so wild when he crossed us,” stressed Priya.

Bindu overtook the two running guys and stopped the bike at a distance, now

facing them. They both got off the bike and waited until the chaser came up to a catching distance and let go of the handsome one. As he was about to cross them, they pounced upon the goon. Bindu held his left hand and Priya, his right. With all their might they both nabbed him right on the floor. He was astounded as he gasped for breath and could hardly open his mouth to speak.

The handsome one turned back from a distance. He was awestruck by what he just saw. He thanked them hurriedly and escaped quickly into the crowd, in one of the by-lanes.

Priya called Deepu to the spot after they had tied his hands at his back with Bindu's Dupatta. It wasn't too long before Deepu arrived. The trio forced him into the car. Bindu and Priya held him between them at the pillion. The car went straight to Jayanagar police station. All the way till they reached the station the stranded guy kept resisting and pleading them to let him go, but to no avail.

"Do you know what the hell you girls have just done?" said he, at last, in a tone which couldn't be ignored.

"Yes! We have saved an innocent guy from a rascal," said Priya coldly.

"No! You have, in fact, endangered a lot of innocent lives. Lives of beautiful girls like you! Lives of many young people."

"What do you mean!?" said Deepu in astonishment.

"Stop there, you scoundrel!" pierced the air. It was the rib chilling voice of Prashant. It shook Meena and the predatory tea vendor, completely. He immediately withdrew.

Prashant rushed towards them. The other girls followed. It was a moment of deep shame. They gave a stern warning to the tea vendor and left the spot of embarrassment taking Meena along. After all, they couldn't be vocal about this.

Prashant and the three girls realised that they were in a very deep crisis. Had he not come in search of the girls, things would've gone really awful. Meena was spared the horror. They were quite shaken. Repeated warnings from their teachers and Principal against illicit habits, earlier, had done very little. But

now, all of that made sense to them for the very first time.

Prashant realized that the gravity of the situation had unconsciously forced them to surpass the compulsion to consume then. This understanding reinforced Prashant's hopes on a complete de-addiction. Rehabilitation was the need of the hour.

This incident had also brought about another realisation in him. Yes. He had fallen in love with Meena. Meena too could sense something more than usual happening between them. She always had an eye on him, but not a serious one. But now it blossomed into a new level of attraction for him, which she herself didn't really know how to describe.

Prashant made up his mind to get himself and the rest out of the whole mess. He discussed this with the girls openly. Prashant being a rich Businessman's son, decided to secretly engage a doctor for the four to be rehabilitated to normalcy. The process would start soon.

This experience was a big eye opener for him. He empathized with all those students like him who had been lured into this dangerous habit and had ruined their lives. His heart went out for all those who were struggling to emancipate themselves out of the claws of this terrible habit. He felt he should do something about it. But how? Where should he start?

In a moment of deep thought it occurred to him that he had to start from where he himself had been victimized first. Yes. He had to start from his college and save his college mates first. But how? Any amount of advice or instructions may have little or no impact. He had to work out on curbing the supply side rather than labouring on eliminating the demand for dope. That's a more effective way.

He recalled a conversation with his old friend who had warned him severely against the habit. He himself had been affected by it indirectly. "He is sure to have better ideas about the whole drug racket," he thought. He had to be confided. But where to find him? Should he go to the police instead?

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"Yes! The one who you caused to escape is the blackguard spearheading a huge drug cartel in South Indian region, ruining thousands of lives," roared Pradeep. "I have been following him for the past six months. That bastard

spoilt my sis....” he broke down without completing the sentence.

It stirred the three girls. They were not sure about what he was saying but it had had an effect of mellowing them down.

“Today I had him at my arm’s length,” he continued after gathering himself.

“Why didn’t you go to the cops then?” interjected Priya.

“A network capable of buying the entire judiciary can’t just be led to the Police without having any solid evidence against them. Had I just nabbed him today, I would’ve handed him over to the police. Now I know better. If we have him open his mouth, we could get to the very roots of this whole business here,” said he.

“Now you please let me go,” he continued. “I know where he’d possibly be. He might even leave the country today. I need to catch him before it’s too late.”

While lamenting thus, he saw Prashant through the window, getting out of his car and got excited.

‘At last, I find someone to my rescue,’ he thought.

“Prashant!” he yelled out.

Prashant looked around. The voice sounded quite familiar to him. He heard it again from the direction of a red Sedan which was at a little distance away from the Police station. He slowly started walking towards it, a bit nonplussed.

Prashant, on seeing Pradeep held by two girls was surprised and equally discombobulated at the same time.

“He’s a friend of mine,” Pradeep told the girls.

“What has become of you? I was actually looking forward to meeting you today but knew not how. I lost your number. I was going to the police instead. Why are you held a captive like this?” asked Prashant, getting at the car.

He looked at the three girls and felt enraptured by their presence. He was not sure if he was actually feeling terrible about his friend’s plight or delighted about this new encounter with three of the most pleasing visual cues he had ever witnessed. Situation got a bit relaxed. He was invited inside

the car and the four explained the situation to him.

After Prashant's assurances of Pradeep, the girls' apologies and exchange of a few courteous remarks, Pradeep narrated his story to them.

Pradeep had lost his younger sister to drug overdose. She had been lured into substance abuse by her boyfriend. It once happened that in a rave party she and her boyfriend went wild and gave in to excessive snuffing. Her boyfriend opened his eyes after 4 days but she had succumbed on the very next day. This incident shattered Pradeep completely and changed his life for good. He took a vow to put an end to drugs, at least in his city. He took several steps meticulously to discover many kingpins in the drug industry responsible to drug handle different areas in the city. Six months ago, he found a major lead. He began to follow the chief liaison who was facilitating the rapid increase in the supply of Cocaine, Marijuana and Heroin in the city, through his international contacts.

It was only this day that while Pradeep followed him, could the guy smell something fishy. He recognized the face which he had happened to notice on two other occasions earlier. He grew suspicious. He looked at Pradeep but he didn't want a direct confrontation. He tried to escape his eyes and started to double up his pace but Pradeep wouldn't let him.

Pradeep had learnt that the criminal was leaving the country for good. His brain began to act faster. He informed this to one of his friends in the police department who was his accomplice in the operation.

A promotion was long overdue. The police friend wanted to work on this operation and make headway much before the department made a case out of it and handed it over to someone other than him. He insisted that Pradeep never let the criminal give them a slip that day and if he had to be confronted, there should be no hesitation.

After a certain point, the chase had become more explicit and it ended up becoming fierce. This is when the three damsels intervened and changed the course of the whole episode to the present situation.

During their secret investigations, Pradeep and the police friend had learnt that heroin was smuggled into India from Afghanistan via Pakistan through Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Rajasthan borders, concealed inside tin cans of processed food. They were further supplied to Sri Lanka apart from local

dispatch.

After listening to Pradeep the three girls felt aghast. Their earlier animosity towards him now turned into respect for him. They decided to join hands with him in his mission to bust this racket. They also had a moral obligation to undo their wrong.

Prashant, for his turn, briefed his story to them and earned their sympathies.

At last, he said “So, where do we go from here?” with determination.

“We need to stop him from escaping the country,” replied Pradeep.

“Do you know where he is heading to?” asked Deepu.

“Yes Deepu-Deepu right? He’s going to Bolivia. That’s the new hub for drug trafficking in South America. He has a huge clientele there,” replied Pradeep.

“Hey wait! Why don’t we trap him at the airport then?” interjected Priya.

“Well, we should not underestimate our opponent. Now that he nearly had a confrontation with me I’m sure he’d suspect I have gathered quite some information about him. I’m certain that he’ll have alternate plans as a measure of precaution.”

“Then what’s our further course of action?” asked Bindu worriedly.

“Any suggestions Prashant? He might have left the place of his hideout by now or maybe not,” said Pradeep. After all, Pradeep had personally followed the gang like a vigilante and knew all their flocking points, especially this one.

“I think it is better we go to the police. We cannot lose a moment, literally. I don’t think we five can handle the situation by ourselves. We are not clear about his plan of exit either,” Prashant suggested.

They had a small huddle. Pradeep gave instructions to each one of them. Everyone seemed totally pumped up. What next? We have an exciting night on cards.

“Who are they?” babbled George, trembling.

“Got no clue George! Now, these were real women. They simply drew me

crazy. Not like the ones I've met so far. I couldn't get enough of them," said Joseph, lighting his cigarette. "It was a tiff between my adrenaline and testosterone," he added.

"Now you need to be more careful Jossy. If the police smelt out even an iota of our stink ..."

"Aargh! Don't be such a pussy cat Georgie. I'll handle them," he replied, releasing rings of smoke.

"Come on Joseph you can't be so reckless. You said he almost clenched your shirt today. What if he is a cop or an agent?"

"You are fucking frightened. Chill your ass buddy. If he ever happens to get anywhere close to us then he's asking for a ticket to hell," retorted Joseph.

"But yes, I'm goina give him a big slip tonight even if he fuses his balls out to track me down," he continued. "I don't think those chicks will let him go tonight unless they've got some real brains behind their delightful somas. Before they discovered me, I'd have flown to Bolivia. You've got to build our business here and take it to newer heights."

As they were thus conversing, footsteps at some distance alarmed them; their small dingy room in a single storeyed building animated even a pin drop. It was a quiet residential area. George could hear his heart beating loud. He ran down to check if anything was wrong. He looked around and examined every bit of what he could. He found nothing suspicious. Joseph prepared himself for an attack, just in case. George returned to the room.

"It's the oldie next door I guess. Her hall lights are lit," alluded George.

"Alright. I need to leave now. It's time. If anything, just ring me on the secret number," said Joseph and prepared to leave.

"Take care Jossy," bade George, good bye.

Deepu and Pradeep were eagerly waiting for communication from Priya. Upon Pradeep's insistence, Bindu and Priya had been secretly stationed close to the criminal hideout to keep a vigil.

"Hey Pradeep. Come let's catch him. He wouldn't have left yet," urged Deepu.

Before finished saying the last word they saw a car vrooming past them. Deepu's phone rang. It was Priya. Deepu picked the call and turned the loud speaker on.

"He just left in a car. We have taken note of his car number. Shall we follow him? We are already on the bike. He should've just crossed you guys." Priya said anxiously in one breath.

"Excellent! Message us the car number. By the way, you heard anything?" said Pradeep curiously.

Priya narrated the conversation between George and Joseph verbatim. She was smart at eavesdropping.

After gathering all the information quickly, Pradeep said "Start immediately, but don't let him know that he's been followed. He must have covered quite some distance now. You might even miss him, but never mind. By the direction of the turn his car took, I think he's going north. Guess it's Majestic."

"Alright! Sure," replied she and hung up.

"Now, we'll have to inform the police about his whereabouts, Deepu. He may not necessarily escape from Bangalore by tonight's flight. George should open his mouth if we were to take the lead," said he, thoughtfully.

"Ok let's have George upon his Knees then. We need another person. How I wish Priya was with me now. Bindu could've managed it alone. Is Prashant on his way?" said Deepu.

"He must be here anytime. Lo! Here he is!" exclaimed Pradeep.

"Come on Prashant. It's all working fine. We are lucky he is still within the city limits. Did you talk to your uncle by the way?"

"Yes I did," ejaculated Prashant. "He is more than glad getting involved!"

Prashant's uncle was a retired Police commissioner. For a man whose sense of Policing was still pretty much alive, it was like a walk in the park for him. He readily obliged to help when the situation was explained to him.

"Great. Come let's deal with George now," said Pradeep and started moving.

They slowly tip toed up the stairs to the dungeon and knocked the room door "tok tok tok!" Deepu and Prashant hid themselves into positions. George

cautiously peeped out to look through the window pane. He was shocked to see Pradeep standing next to the door. An unsolicited visitor at that hour!? And that too a stranger.

“Who are you?” he yelled out from inside.

“It’s an emergency. I am one of you. Joseph sent for me”, lied Pradeep.

“How do I believe you? I’ve never seen you before.”

“Well, Joseph asked me to lend you a helping hand. He’s leaving tonight right? You are George, aren’t you?”

Puzzled and unsure, George sceptically opened the door. The moment he did, Pradeep forced him inside, bewildering him. Before he could gather himself, Deepu and Prashant barged in from behind. They dragged him on to the floor and force tied his hands behind with the aid of hand locks. Then, they tied his legs together with a rope they found inside and plugged his mouth with a piece of cloth; Pradeep was always equipped with accessories, just in case there was a need.

Police was called in. Unable to bear the treatment, George opened his mouth. He revealed that Joseph would travel by bus to Hyderabad that night, and the following day, he would fly to Sucre, the Bolivian capital from there.

Time was running short. Joseph had to be stopped somehow. Can Bindu and Priya handle him themselves?

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Deepu called Priya to confirm they were on track as Joseph was indeed proceeding to Majestic.

“Speed up Bindu! Take the shortest route to Majestic. Let’s get there before him” urged Priya.

Bindu rode at great speeds manoeuvring through narrow lanes and byways. They almost reached Majestic at about the same time as Joseph, though they didn’t see him getting down. They decided to spread in opposite directions. One went to the exit and another remained at the entrance, hiding. They kept watching carefully; they knew what type of dress he was wearing. They vividly remembered his face. He wouldn’t escape their eyes even if he changed his outfit on the way.

Joseph got down from a cab. Being precautions, he should have parked his car somewhere midway and taken a cab. He had even changed clothes and had no luggage with him, except for a backpack. Instead of taking the entrance, he walked round the station to enter through the exit.

Bindu saw him! She couldn't contain her excitement. She gave a missed call to Priya and quickly followed him.

Joseph kept watching as he walked swiftly. It seemed like he had eyes at the back of his head too. He felt someone was following him. He stood for a moment and took a sudden left to see sideways. Realising, Bindu retreated instantaneously to show her back and pretended to move in the opposite direction. However, Joseph identified her. He remembered her dress. In those few moments he ran into the girls that morning, he had scanned Bindu's body completely. He loved it!

Now, he quietly continued to walk and moved out of the bus station through the front entrance. Without realizing his intentions and consumed by her own adventurous zeal, Bindu followed him mindlessly. He tactfully led her to a narrow, empty lane. They almost came to a dead end. There was nobody around.

Just before she became aware of the trap she had almost fallen into, Joseph abruptly made a U-turn and took her by surprise. She got terrified but didn't move. She stood stone still. Their eyes locked. Nobody said a word. Tension was mounting. Each one waited for the other to make the first move.

For a moment he was tempted to have her in his arms in Bolivia. But no, if he delayed his exit now, it could well happen that he would never.

"E-on! E-on! E-on! E-on!" It was the sound of a Patrolling Jeep.

Bindu turned around. Seeing the Police vehicle, she found a ray of hope. Feeling relieved, she ran up to it, all the way till the beginning of the gully, without looking back.

"What's the matter?" enquired the lady inspector.

Panting, she replied, "There is... there is a drug criminal stuck at...at the dead end of this street. He needs to be arrested immediately."

The lady officer got down. She gave some water to Bindu that she had in the Jeep. Soothing her, she went along to check if there was someone.

Surprisingly, there was nobody!

While Bindu ran towards the police jeep, Joseph's adrenaline gave him that extra push to jump across the high wall of a house. He strode up to the terrace and crossed one building after another like a gymnast. Within no time, he was far away from the gully he was in, without giving an inkling of his presence to the residents. Confirming there's no one around, he quietly landed on a street close to the bus station and quickly ran inside.

Meanwhile, Priya was wandering alone watchfully at the exit, searching for Bindu. After half an hour of futile search she decided to call Bindu and picked her phone. As she almost made the call she saw a familiar face rushing inside a bus that had just started to move. Holding the phone, she curiously moved forward to see who it was. The bus sped. She doubled up her pace and for a moment had a look at the face sideways. She knew it was Joseph. The bus now went full speed and left the station. It was apparent that he would reach Hyderabad by morning.

On the other hand, the lady police looked all around from the dead end of the gully. The walls were too high for anyone to escape. For her, it was either the girl was hallucinating or the guy was a superhuman. She politely consoled the muttering Bindu and dropped her at the bus station with a few pieces of advice on women's safety and left.

Bindu joined Deepu. They both were dejected.

As if like a spell cast on her, Bindu couldn't come out of the past hour. Her brain was still occupied with her confrontation with Joseph and his extraordinary disappearance.

Priya called Deepu to brief the happenings and learnt from her of the George episode.

"We did our best after all," said Priya, after listening to Bindu's nerve racking experience once she became a bit sober.

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"We are very grateful to you Pradeep. We learnt a valuable lesson from you," said Deepu sipping her coffee.

"What's that?" asked Pradeep curiously.

"Appearances are deceptive."

“So did I,” replied Pradeep and laughed.

“What do you mean?” said Deepu with a cute stare.

“God save me. I was just joking.”

“Don’t think you are too smart. You were plain lucky that Joseph didn’t take the flight route from Bangalore, that night. All our efforts to bring him to books would’ve gone in vain!” teased Priya.

“I had my police friend waiting at the airport, miss charming,” he quipped. “We had the Police department secretly monitoring all the check-posts. The railway stations within the city had never seen so many un-uniformed cops secretly spying. He virtually had no chance to escape,” he added.

“He was so manly. Had he not been into this god damn drug business I would’ve dated him for sure,” Bindu regretted. She recalled her encounter with him.

“As if I would have given him up to you,” teased Priya.

“Thank god he turned out to be bad. Where’ll guys like us go?” said Pradeep and laughed again.

Everyone laughed.

“Hey, by the way, I’m curious to know. How did you manage to catch him?” Bindu asked.

“Prashant’s uncle wired Hyderabad Police of his arrival there and briefed them the situation. They trapped him inside the bus and took him to custody. Investigation is on. George is being interrogated here. I hope this will ring death knells to drug cartels in Bengaluru. I personally thank you three for your involvement in this case. Your boldness is commendable. I’d like to see a dope-free India one day!”

“We are thankful to you too for the thrill and adventure,” said Deepu. The other two nodded in acknowledgement.

“Hey where’s Prashant by the way? Regressed back to consumption again yeah?” joked Priya.

“Well, well, he’s gotten addicted to a more powerful sedate.”

“What? Again??!!” exclaimed the girls in unison.

“Yes. He’s completely lost ...,” said Pradeep and giving a brief pause, he ended it mischievously saying “in Meena’s bosom!”

Everyone burst into laughter again.

-----by RAVI. V