

I KNOW A U..

WHO KNEW A ME

It's sometimes like flaunting a body on a lifeless soul

by

AMIT JHA

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I saw a silhouette once. I tried with all might to hold on to myself but to no avail. Restless, I went near it. Heavenly it was, destined I was. Losing her was never my desire. Never did I know, I was to map the voyage of my life all alone, which once displayed a picturesque of together us...

Acknowledgement

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Heartiest thanks to YOU for deciding to read this piece of story of my life...

- Amit jha

Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgement</i>	5
<i>Prologue</i>	11
<i>The End</i>	19
<i>Before We Met</i>	34
<i>Destiny Knocks</i>	47
<i>Intermission I</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>The First Vista</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>The Love Sprinkling</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>I Had To... Propose</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>When I Almost Lost Her</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>Studies, College & Anannya</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>The Pinch of Break-up</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>After She Departed</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>Intermission II</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>The Hallow Dawn</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>Epilogue</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Dedicated

To

Every one who's ever been in Love

&

To Her

Prologue

"Ee ruu¹... Liar..." A look of almost-real anguish covered her face.

"When did I lie to you dear?" I turned my face up, desperate to show my innocence of her accusation.

"You always..." Anannya paused before completing her sentence. She had noticed me beginning to climb the stairs, calmly approaching her.

She was perched comfortably on the stairway ending right before her dorm.

"See, who's the liar? I'm right here, as you ordered." I disconnected the call and stopped right in front of her, smugly shrugging my shoulders.

Anannya looked down upon me with amusement, her eyes slowly and sensually scanned me from bottom to head. After luxuriously dragging her gaze over me for a few minutes, she casually looked away as if she did not recognize me, her lips widening into a teasing smile. She had ragged me purposely. Springing up, she gave a small twirl in midair, giving me an alluring view of her backside, before fleeing into the room.

I attempted, mentally, to lower down my rising temptation. Smiling, I shook my head, inhaled deep, "God..." Ruffled my hair, exhaled and followed after her.

She was slouched on a bed which lay upon the floor. Her knees were drawn up to her chest. Her creamy white gown hugged her neatly and delicately, glittering here and there. I was overwhelmed. Her hair, which she had grown out at my request, concealed her left bare shoulder. Her sparkling eyes cunningly arrested my unscrupulous gaze.

"Why did you refill my cell phone? You shouldn't have." The unwelcome change in topic brought a frown to my face.

"IDEA is running a buddies offer. I refilled my cell, but then realized your cell phone's balance was also running low. I just passed on the benefit to you too. After all, we're friends... Right?"

"Still..."

"Now stop being negative." I removed my shoes and sat down beside her. "An IDEA can change your life, you know?"

"Huh... And how exactly does it do that?"

"Chill... That's just their slogan." I eased myself on the bed next to her. Gently took her shoulders, and pulled her towards me. She swayed in my arms. Her cute, childlike face rested against my chest and her right hand hooked on to my left shoulder. I wrapped my arms around her tightly. It felt complete.

¹ An Assamese slang (Indian language)

"An idea has changed our lives already... Hasn't it?" I said.

She had completely surrendered herself to my embrace. Her eyes were closed. Her breathing had become heavy. I was unable to slow my pounding heart, which was beating right against her ear.

"How?" she asked softly.

"Hasn't it... Already...? Mmm..." I answered as I tightened my embrace.

"Mmmm... Please." She feebly tried to resist.

"Are you sleepy? Let's lie down, comfortably." I slowly untangled my hands and rubbed her back gently.

She acted being sleepy indeed. Unwillingly, she detached herself from me, but did not open her eyes. Her body leaned lifelessly against me.

I moved a few strands of hair from her lovely cheek and pushed them behind her ear. Cautiously, I lowered myself onto my back and gently positioned her on top of me so as not to disturb her. She adjusted by spreading her legs over me and clutching me tight.

"Nautanki²," I whispered.

She giggled and hugged me tighter, rolling her legs over mine.

It was very late in the evening when I was roused by her persistent efforts.

"Amit... Amit," Anannya kept whispering into my ear.

"Ungh... Five more minutes... Please." I rolled on my back away from her.

"Amit, the tea is ready. Either you get up or I'll throw it in the washbasin." It was clear she wasn't going to let me rest, so I decided to accept the inevitable and sat up still half-asleep.

Anannya sat down beside me and ruffled my already-untidy hair. "Better."

She procured a platter from the floor and set it in my lap, and then picked up a cup and placed it in my hands. I blearily eyed the drink for a moment and took a sip.

"Mmmm... Jannant³," I murmured as the sweet flavor and aroma began to bring me back to life, praising the aroma of diluted love wafting out of it.

"No need to overreact. I know you too well. You just are keeping my heart." She replied.

"Have you always hated me, or is this a recent development?" I asked groggily. Anannya ducked, attempting to hide her mischievous smile from me.

She picked up a biscuit from the plate, "Ammeeeet..." Her lower jaw puckered up in an attempt to pronounce my name differently, "...Marigold" and began devouring the biscuit. The expression on her face mounted her dislike for the flavour.

"You don't like it?" I asked.

She stuck out her tongue and shook her head. Pieces of the saliva-soaked biscuit dotted her tongue, "No".

"Then why are you eating it?" I asked.

² One who is dramatic

³ Heavenly

"Why don't you stop shouting and buy me some biscuits that actually taste good to me?"

"When did I...?" I wanted to ask just when the hell I screamed at her, but dismissed the thought.

"Which one is your favorite?"

"Goodday," she answered, pouting like a child.

"All right, we'll go buy these."

"He he!" She giggled, and gobbled up the remaining two biscuits. I could only smile at her antics.

"Let's go down to market right away."

I was amused by her sudden conjure.

"Hurry and finish your tea we're leaving for shopping," Anannya continued giddily. "Let me also go dress up."

"How exactly is biscuit-buying related to... Shopping?" I inquired.

"I'm crazy, I'm irritating, blah, blah, you will say it all now. I know all that. Now come on, hurry up."

"You're also as stubborn as hell," I thought quietly.

A half an hour later we were holding hands in the crowded streets of the Sarojani Nagar market. The Sarojani Nagar and 3Cs Central Market were two of the many interesting places in the capital where we could often be found idly roaming around. Only the calendar dates was changed today and probably the amount of pennies in my wallet.

She stopped in almost every shop to buy something or the other for herself: Bangles, ear rings, nose pins, t-shirts, Momos, ice cream. I swear we didn't miss a single shop! And the whole time, for the entirety of that mild October evening, our hands were clasped tightly together.

The weather surprisingly was pleasant as well. Besides herself, a few t-shirts were also purchased for me. And very often, at some of the counters, I was deliberately dragged over to finish off the already chewed edibles she didn't find appealing.

Pleasure it was just to look on as her tongue licked an ice cream cone, as she took a huge bite off the top, as she wolfed all her food down. Just the way I told her not to. I playfully nudged her head and scolded her to eat slowly.

After a few hours of roaming around the market, I suggested we call it a night. It was getting late and I didn't want to miss out on dinner. Anannya ignored my words and dragged me into another shop.

"No, jhalli⁴, no more!" I scolded her.

"Show me that one," she ordered the shopkeeper, and pointed to one of the idols on display.

The man picked up the idol and placed it in her hand, a statuette of Lord Ganesha⁵.

"It's so cute, isn't it?" Lord Ganesha was her favorite god, so the idol had to be unarguably cute.

"Of course," I agreed.

"Get me one more idol exactly like this one, bhaiya⁶!" The man was more than happy to serve this beautiful girl who was perhaps the only customer wandering in his shop at this point of time. For a few minutes I waited patiently as they bargained back and forth.

⁴ Anannya's pet name, which Amit fondly called her by

⁵ A Deity

⁶ Mostly people from Bihar and UP in India use the word Bhaiyya while calling unknown or even known persons. Bhaiyya literally means big brother.

However, I had to interrupt their chit-chat after it became apparent they weren't really getting anywhere. Anannya was picking up, examining, bidding, arguing, bargaining and replacing several different kinds of idol, but could not seem to decide on one she either liked or thought I could afford. Meanwhile, my stomach was roaring for food.

Finally I lost patience. "How much?" I asked as I picked up the very first idol Anannya had spotted when entering the shop. I just couldn't take any more bargaining.

"100 rupees⁷ for two," the owner replied. Paying him the money, I took the idols from his hand and shoved it at Anannya.

"Come on, let's leave!" I could feel her mocking glare as I dragged her out of the store.

"Sweetheart, it's dinner time and I'm famished." I wrapped my arm around her shoulders, "How about you?" We had settled down inside the rick which would ferry us to our destination.

"No. I'm angry," she countered.

I tightened my grip lovingly, "You're my naughty little girl...."

She shrugged out of my hold. "Leave me alone!" she retorted. "I don't want food, I hate you. Go away."

"Aww! Jhalli is angry? No worries, I'll make up for it." I casually reached around her again.

"Baap ka maal hai kya?⁸" She weakly tried to shrug my arm off again.

But this time I didn't let go, "Mera maal hai...⁹" I responded, and jerked her towards me with more force. She was pulled up tightly against me. "Go off to sleep, now."

Her frame swayed with the movement of the rick. Her head tilted to rest on my shoulder.

The moment desired to ignore everything else at present happening in the rest of the world around us. She gently rested her head on my shoulder and I began lightly combing her hair. She slept like that until we arrived at her home.

A girl always likes attention, but even more so in Anannya's case. And it was my attention she craved the most.

"No one cares about me. Nobody even asked what I bought today!" Everything Anannya had purchased that evening was spread across the bed, and she was slowly taking everything out of its wrapper. I lovingly watched every expression crossing her face as she worked: Her favourite items evoked a beautiful smile on her face, while the less desirable ones brought out tiny frowns.

"He he." For once, she giggled at me as she tore her eyes away from her unpacking frenzy. I couldn't hold back a smile from spreading across my face.

"He he he!" she sniggered, and then was lost again in her purchases. She was like a little kid, already sugar high, loose in a candy store.

⁷ Indian currency

⁸ A slang in Hindi (India's national language) meaning 'I'm not yours father's bought possession.'

⁹ You're mine

In the midst of her belongings, she looked up with a bright smile plastered on her beautiful face.

"Aaammeeet?"

"Yes sweetheart?" I couldn't help smiling too.

"I love you."

I closed my eyes, completely content. "I know."

She pushed aside the wrapping paper on the bed and dragged herself close to sit right next to me. "And thank you," She finished as she snuggled up beside me, soft hands draped around my neck, pink lips pressed against my cheek, warm body sheltered in the grooves of my curled legs.

Until that day, I had never felt so alive in my entire life. I had never extended my gratitude to her for making me feel like a special part of her life. At that moment, I desired nothing more than to open my heart and grant her all of my love, my very soul. At that moment, I wanted her to find shelter in my arms and never leave. So I hugged her tightly against me.

"Thank you," I imitated lovingly.

I cradled her tighter, wordlessly expressing my emotions. Her eyes remained closed as she sank deeper into my embrace.

My heart had started beating thunderously. Anannya noticed and opened her eyes, looking up at me quizzically. I closed my own eyes, a signal that all was fine. However, she had a different idea. I shivered with excitement as her breath quickened and tickled my chin. Perhaps she wanted more. Anannya's face was an inch away from my own, her bright cheeks nearly touching my nose, her slightly parted lips tantalizingly close to my own. I couldn't hold myself back any longer, and swiftly closed the distance. It was like an electric current when our lips touched. A pleasurable chill ran down my spine, and goose bumps rose on my arms.

Immediately she broke away, scrambling backwards in her hurry to create a safe distance between us...

"W-what happened?" I asked in surprise.

"Amit! This is not right. This is..." She broke off with a half-sob and tears began leaking from her eyes.

"Hey, what..." I broke off my words, unsure how to make the erringly messed up situation right.

"I'm sorry... Sweetheart." My eyes pleaded for forgiveness. A guilty feeling crawled down my spine, though I still wasn't sure what I had done wrong. It was terrible. "What did I do?"

"Amit..." She somehow managed, "I..." she struggled to get her words out between sobs. "I love you..."

"Oh my God, This silly reason... was behind your dreadful cry? Gosh!"

I felt however, relieved that it was only something as silly as this, and not some grave mistake on my part.

"That was my first kiss, Amit." Her sobs showed no signs of subsiding.

"And I want to give you your last kiss, too." I hugged her again.

"Momma will not let this happen. I can't marry you." She curled up against my chest, still sobbing between words.

"Well, we can at least try. Don't worry, we'll work it out." I rubbed her back comfortingly. We stayed like that for a long time.

"Amitt?" Finally Anannya's voice broke the stillness.

"Yes?"

"Will you come to my wedding? In case we..." It seemed as if Anannya had grown heavier as she drooped against my chest.

"In case..." I murmured unconsciously, and started gently caressing her hair.

"Perhaps...wouldn't..."

My mouth went dry and I had to force the words out. "I wouldn't want you to go on a lovesick rampage and rush me in front of your whole family. You're just crazy enough to do it."

And... We lapsed into a lonely silence. I didn't attempt to break it either.

I don't understand a God that would allow us to meet, when there is no way for us to be together.

- CITY OF ANGELS (movie)

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