

*Love  
Unexpected*



# Love Unexpected

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*To my mothers.  
Who have, are and will always be the pillars  
of my strength and encouragement.*

*You are what you are,  
So, if and when presented with the  
Unexpected by life  
One should learn from it and  
Not run away.  
Because,  
The fight is always better than flight.*

## Acknowledgement



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Good lord! Who could be calling at this hour? Everyone knows better than to trouble me at work, especially from noon to 1:30 p.m., my busiest hours. The only time when the workload at the café is the least, thus the best time to sit and tally all the records, books, files and registers for my cafe. It's a chore that I hate to the core, but the final check has to be done by me. Being the boss has its downside, despite having an efficient staff. The phone continues to ring, I reach for it, to stop its grating sound.

Oops! It's Sam! We usually prefer to keep our conversations for home. No one knows better than him that I'm my worst enemy at this time of the day. So it has to be a good and valid reason. Hopefully not like the last time when he had called wanting to know *his* wife's favourite ice-cream flavour. Like seriously... he sure got a piece of my mind that day. Since then, today is the first time he has called.

“What!?!?” I practically shout into the phone.

“OMG, OMG!!! What are you saying? For heaven's sake, slow down a bit. Begin again, and this time, go slow. Now tell me, how on earth is this possible? Like where? When? How?... No, forget that, please tell me is she okay? Why are you wasting your time calling me, you dork? You should be with her!” I shout in fear and panic.

The fear in my voice sure calms my brother a notch. When he speaks again, he uses the regular authoritative tone that he uses with me.

“Gosh Kaira, will you keep quiet, for heaven’s sake? Your hyper attitude can create a ruckus enough to wake the dead. Damn it! You simply go on blabbering, making any normal conversations impossible.”

I keep quiet for a few seconds only to snap back with twice the indignation.

“Hey, hey! If you back up a little, you will realise that a few seconds ago, you did not sound so cool yourself. In fact, you sounded possessed with fear and worry. So, don’t try to act too smart with me; it is just the suddenness of the news that got me a little jittery.”

After a small pause, I added sarcastically, “Sam, will you please settle down and talk. Your pacing around won’t help you loose weight, but will sure give you and everyone around a headache.”

“Oh god! Can you not crack jokes, especially at a time like this, sister dear? By the way, how did you know I was walking around?”

“Well, that is easy. You, dear brother, sound breathless. It usually happens when you are pacing around. So basically, you cannot even take small rounds without getting short of breath, huh!”

“Okay, fine! Now, stop listing my shortcomings and this meaningless rant. Please, just listen carefully. Tasha is fine. Yes, she is at the hospital, with the doctor attending to her as we speak. If all goes well, she will deliver our baby anytime soon. Kaira, I cannot express how thrilled I am! But her painful screams echoing through the entire ward is really making me nervous, and a little scared.”

After a small pause, he whispers, almost sounding shocked at his words. “You know Kaira, I would never have believed Tasha could abuse if I had not heard it myself today. I mean, we have been together for more than four years now and she has never said such things. But man, it did sound sooo cool and hot coming from her.”

A feeling of relief and calmness rushes through my nerves, and with it the need for answers surfaces. But hearing the last statement does bring a smile to my face. He sounds so zapped. If not for the seriousness of the situation, it would have been hilarious. So, I let it slide for now and start firing questions while gathering my stuff from the desk.

“But Sam, how? When? But mostly, why? Is it not a little too early? I mean, she is not due for another three weeks or so. So, what happened? And what are the doctors saying? How is the baby?”

He takes a deep breath and replies impatiently. I so detest this, but for now, I choose to focus on Tasha and the baby. I can imagine him waving his hand in the air as he attempts to explain the situation while continuing with his marathon across the hospital lobby.

“Her water bag broke while we were having lunch. As for your *why*... how the bloody hell should I know that? This is my first time too! Oh, goodness gracious, wait! I do know why. Yes, yes, actually my baby is super impatient just like her/his crazy aunt. Is that reason enough, eh?”

I let out a fake laugh and respond rather dramatically, “Yayayaa Sammy, I totally get it. You’re really trying hard to be snarky, but you are awful at it, brother.”

“Arrgh!! Kaira! Don’t call me Sammy! You know I hate it. Especially now that I am going to be a father. It neither sounds mature, nor fatherly.”

His breathing normalises, so I guess he has stopped walking. I can almost imagine him smiling slightly now.

I chuckle silently at having rattled him out of his sour mood. But I clear my throat before speaking again. If he as much as hears the humour in my voice, it would irritate him once again.

“Well, brother dear, that is a conversation for another time. Ohh btw! Why aren’t you with Tasha? Why didn’t you just ask mom to call?”

“I know! I too didn’t want to leave Tasha alone right now. Calling you myself seemed easier and faster rather than going to look for mom. But now I wish I had, I would have returned to Tasha by now instead of the mindless chattering with you.”

“Don’t be mean, bro! You know I can’t help questioning, and I love talking. Plus, when I left this morning, Tasha was absolutely fine.”

“Yeah, okay, whatever! Now, I have no idea what difference your presence will make, but Tasha wants her bestie here. But for what it’s worth, come quickly.”

“Hey, that’s not fair! You should know better than anyone what Tasha and my relationship means. So, my presence there is as significant as yours, brother dear.”

“I know... I know! You know, hearing you go ballistic when I rattle you, especially about Tasha, gives me an amazing high.”

“Hahaha! You are too funny Sammy! I understand you are stressed, but don’t use me to calm your rattled nerves. Everything else aside, it’s my right as an aunty to be with Tasha and you right now. I am, after all, your one and only sister, *the aunt!*”

“Gosh Kai! You are impossible! Now please get off your high horse and move it. Let’s just pray that all goes well.

“Why are you stressing? You may be the cause of this situation, but I am the one who faced the flak. Remember all those check-

ups, sonographies, and boring pre-natal classes where I was forced to perform your role because you were busy!”

I imitate the obnoxious breathing noises taught in the classes just to pull another fast one on him. I speak in a low, poor me voice, “You know those classes were embarrassing and pretty torturous. But I did it, didn’t I?”

I pause dramatically again, “But then you know what Sammy, this child is getting a lively, sexy, in fact the most amazing aunt ever! I am after all one of a kind! *The best!*”

I smile as I imagine the mixed feelings he must be experiencing right now.

“Will you stop self obsessing now and get on that stupid bike you own? We don’t want another patient, so please ride carefully.”

Before I can retaliate, he mutters, “Why can’t you just get a car, like normal human beings?”

“You really are grumpy today! Actually, it is not that much of a surprise, huh. As for my bike and me, we are always careful. And FYI, cars are boring and take longer to reach places. Whereas my bike and I understand the roads and each other very well.”

“Okay! Now, will you please hurry? Having to watch Tasha wither in pain was really difficult. Didn’t know she was so strong... Come fast.. Kai.”

Hearing his forlorn voice made my heart sink. “Hey Sammy! Chillax... Of course, she is strong. We women are made of steel when it comes to motherhood. Together, you will sail through this, like everything else you both have. Now, shush...!! Don’t be a weak-hearted ass! Go in and take care of her as well as my niece/nephew till I arrive. Bye, I am OMW.”

“Huh, what? What on earth is OMW?”

“What the f...!”

“Kairaaaa, please don’t curse. Your slangs are incomprehensible. I just hate it when you talk like this.”

“Okay, Mr Indignant, don’t shout at me! I am twenty-five, not five years old. And you are twenty-eight, not eighty. Even though you act and behave like a senior citizen most of the time.”

I sigh and exclaim, “Sam, you really need to start growing up and loosening up a bit. You are going to be a father now! And like seriously? You are asking what is ‘omw’? It means ‘On my way’. Even a kid knows that! It is so freaking common... uffff!! Okay, now stop talking so much! I really need to prep everyone here before leaving and you are delaying me. Plus, you need to be with your wifey, I will see you in a while. Bye! You take care now... see you soon.”

I hurriedly hang up before he can start rambling again.

## 2



This is me. The *Talker!* And where is the fun if you don't trouble your brother at every chance you get! In Sam's case, it is effortless to get a reaction from him. He is extreme when it comes to his emotions and attitude towards life. Being the oldest, he is very prim and proper too, all credit to his convent education.

He has a charming and caring side to him, but it's a latent one. A side one rarely gets to see. All this makes him an amazing and protective brother, making it tough for me to live up to his expectations.

Of course, all brothers are over-protective, especially when one has an impulsive nutcase like me as a sister. Yup! I know I am over-friendly and completely outspoken. My love for life and zest for the *now* is perpetual. I sometimes think that onlookers judge me as outrageous, but trust me, I am not so bad. After all, I run a Cafe Library with the help of a fantastic team, who are more like family. And where does it say café owners can't be mischievous and a tad bit crazy?

Shoot, I am doing it again, I need to speak to my team instead of daydreaming. I need to be omw like now, but I am going to be late (as usual).

I begin calling out to my team loudly, which makes everyone in the library look at me in sheer amazement! I was breaking my own rules. Oh god! I really am preoccupied to have broken my own golden rule.

As I start gathering my stuff, it occurs to me that Nikki will take my case for breaking the rules (shoot) as the library area is a complete silence zone.

My heart is beating loudly, pounding with excitement and joy. I am just dying to tell the world; I am going to be an aunt soon. But for now, it will be announced to the closest people in my circle.

“Nikita, Robin, Pete, guys please hurry! A quick word, I need to leave asap.”

“Kaira, please don’t bring down this place with your shouting. This is, after all, your Café Library, remember? So at least maintain the decorum of the place you created. Members are busy with serious work; you know that exam time is nearing for most students.”

I reply hurriedly and nonchalantly, “Okay, okay, I am sorry. Now, where are the others?”

“Robin is at the bank to deposit this month’s profits. Pete is helping Anita downstairs. It’s a crazy day today. So, tell me, where is the fire?”

“Nikki baby, what will I ever do without you? You, my sweetheart, are the best accountant, manager and friend I have ever had... And no, there is no fire. I am going to become an aunt soon; Tasha is about to deliver the baby. So, you can understand my rush. I have to be at the hospital... like... *now!*”

“Oh, wow! Congratulations babes! How is Tasha doing?”

“Thank you! I don’t know exactly how she is doing. Sam just called, and he sounded worried. I am rushing there and will update you. For now, you do me the honours and let the rest of the team know. Please, lock up the café as I will not be returning.

Before I leave, I want to make a small announcement. Could you switch on the mike for me please?”

“Okay! Listen up all my dear patrons slash friends slash book lovers, sorry for the rule break, won’t happen again! Enjoy the first round of today’s coffee on the house from the ‘soon to be’ aunt. So, all you lovely people, have fun!! You all know the rule - ‘Silence is heaven for all’. All the best!”

I step away from the mike amidst huge cheering and shouts of congratulations from across the café. It feels amazing till Nikki interrupts my joy

“Kai, will you just leave? I will handle the rest. All the best and god bless!!”

“Darling!! I say this again and again... what will I do without you?”

“Survive! ‘Cos that’s who you are. But thank you for making me feel special and important.”

“Hahaha, before this becomes an admiration society, I am leaving. Adios, amigo!!”

I stop midway and turn back... shoot! I am going to be even more late... but this was important...

“Oh god! I so forgot. Nikki! You remember I mentioned this new publishing company a few weeks back, ‘The Lantern’ and the owner Mr Aveer Mehra? The new face in the publishing market? The same guy who has made a huge name for himself in the recent years... do you remember him?”

“Yeah, I remember. He got nominated as the youngest entrepreneur in publishing. The name you went all gaga over, hmm? The man whose picture you searched the net, the papers and what not for.”

She smiles mischievously. But I am too distracted and just shake my head in affirmation.

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