~ 29 ~

The Light
His Darkness

Author's POV:

Elders retired to their respective rooms while the youngsters sat in the living room watching a movie. Prem and Priya sat on a couch cuddling, while Ajay and Aasha lied down on the mattress on the floor along with Arjun and Diya. In the middle of the movie, Arjun looked at Diya who was sleeping peacefully. He looked around and saw everyone drifted into sleep. He slowly untangled himself from Diya's hold and got up. He switched off the TV, moved to the guest room, and brought blankets. He covered Prem and Priya with one and Ajay and Aasha with another one. He lied down beside Diya and pulled her towards him. He covered both of them with the blanket and slept, hugging her tight.

The next morning, it was around 5 o' clock when Diya woke up. She was definitely not an early riser, but today her sleep broke. She felt a weight on her and saw Arjun's hand on her waist. He hugged her tight as if she would disappear. Finally, after a lot of difficulties, she got out of his hold and moved to the garden. She sat on the edge of the pool, dipping her legs in it. She closed her eyes, feeling the pleasant atmosphere. The cool morning breeze and the cool water are definitely soothing. She was lost in her world when she felt someone's presence beside her. She opened her eyes and saw Prem sitting beside her.

"Sorry, did I disturb you?" Prem asked her.

"No", Diya said, with a small smile.

"I heard that you are a heavy sleeper", Prem asked her.

"Of course, I'm. Food and sleep are my baes", Diya said, chuckling.

Prem also chuckled, listening to her.

"So, when are you planning to get married?" Prem asked, looking at her.

"I don't know, Prem", she said, playing with her fingers.

"You can share it with me. I won't complain to that bastard", Prem said, looking at her nervousness.

Diya chuckled and said,"It's not like that, and also, I'm not afraid of that bastard friend of yours."

Prem laughed, listening to her words.

"Our marriage discussion never came up between us till now. And now-a-days that so-called friend of us is maintaining his distance from me as if I'm a Corona positive patient", Diya said, laughing at the end."I got tired of asking him what the problem was, as he always diverts the topic."

Prem scolded his dumb best friend a thousand times in his mind.

"You love him, don't you?" Prem asked her. He can say confidently that she is in love with Arjun, but he wants to hear it from her.

"I do", Diya said, with a small smile playing on her lips."Even he knows that."

"Are you not feeling bad that he isn't reciprocating your love?" Prem asked her.

"Prem, when I agreed to the alliance, I knew it would be difficult for him to believe in love again after what had happened in the past. Frankly speaking, I was not even sure that he would agree to the alliance, but then he agreed. I thought he accepted it for the sake of his family's happiness, but he proved me wrong with his gestures. The small efforts he made were used to make me happy. The way he introduced me to his little friends or the way he understood my insecurities and let the world know that he was taken. The way he proposed to me in front of Chytra and stood by my side, something he failed to do in the past, the way he celebrated my birthday and gave me the gift that I always wanted. Actually, I've loved dogs since I was a child. But my Amma didn't allow me saying that I was a kid. My father brought a cute puppy for my 10th birthday. But he grew up in my Nanu's house as my brother was afraid of dogs. I used to play with him when I used to go to their house. After the death of my father, I totally forgot about that wish of mine. When Arjun gifted me Aura, you know, he reminded me of my father. My papa always used to fulfil my unsaid wishes. So, Arjun always reminds me of my father, who used to pamper me, who used to listen to my non-stop stupid banter, who used to protect me and who made me strong. Whenever I saw him with Chytra, I felt a pang in my heart. But I thought it was jealousy as she stole my best friend from me. But that day, when I came to know that he had committed suicide, I felt as if someone had snatched my life. That day, I realised that I felt something for him. Something deep and pure. When Attayya and Vani Peddamma approached my family for the alliance, I knew that he was the one for me. Not only was I overjoyed, but my family was also happy. My Nani was so excited when my Amma told her about the alliance. She was so fond of Arjun from the start. She literally threatened me that she would disown me as her granddaughter if I didn't accept him", Diya chuckled, recalling her Nani's words."When I thought everything was going smoothly, he started maintaining a distance from me. What pains me the most is that he is still stuck with his past. I know it's not that easy to move on, but can't we at least try? Though I have asked him many times to think about us and told him that he can walk out if he wants, I'm afraid. What if I lose him? I have already lost enough people in my life. Yes, if he is happy, then I'll be happy too. But I'll be happier if the reason for his happiness is me. I didn't even realise when he became an integral part of my life. "

Diya poured her heart out. She has finally poured out all those emotions that she has been holding onto all these days. Those feelings of her which she never shared with anyone till date. Sometimes, all we need is a person to share our emotions, isn't it?

Prem understood her inner turmoil. He didn't understand whether to feel happy that his best friend had got an amazing partner or sad because of his behaviour.

Prem was about to speak when they heard the sound of soothing music.

"Music at this time?" Diya asked Prem.

"Priya must have woken up and started her practice," said Prem.

"Oh! Does she practise daily? " Diya asked him.

"Yes! She tries her best not to miss it", said Prem.

"Then come, we will see", said Diya.

With that, both of them moved to the back side of the garden and saw Priya doing dance. Diya was mesmerised by seeing her grace. Yes, she is also a trained classical dancer, but looking at Priya, she felt that she was nothing in front of her. Everything about her expressions, posture, and demeanour was flawless. Priya asked Diya to join her. Diya was reluctant at first, but later she joined Priya.

Prem was awed by looking at both of them and started shooting the video. Soon, others joined him and were captivated by the duo. Priya and Diya stopped their practise and opened their eyes as they heard the sound of claps.

"Wow, Diya. You were too good. I literally couldn't take my eyes off you", said Mahima (Ajay's mother).

"I agree with her. Did you learn classical dance?" Nalini (Prem and Aasha's mother) asked her.

"Yes, aunty. She learnt Bharatanatyam for 6 years", said Arjun.

Diya felt shy as everyone was praising her. She went and hid behind Arjun, making everyone chuckle.

After freshening-up and having their breakfast, everyone went to their respective work places.

It's been a week since Aasha announced her pregnancy. Arjun went back to his home. Diya as usual, busy with her appointments. Everything was going smoothly, but the scene was totally different at Chytra's house.

"Chythu, why are you not doing anything? I mean, Arjun has happily moved on with that girl, and here you are sitting silently. Don't you love him? " Rajesh asked Chytra.

"I really don't have clarity on whether I loved Arjun or not. I went before him, as she said, and I did everything that she told me to do. For my selfish reasons, I pretended to love him, but at one point, I did fall in love with him. Everything went according to our plan, but I didn't expect that things would turn out that way and he would be proven innocent within a week. Lately, I realised that I acted foolishly all this time while listening to her words. My career was destroyed, and I couldn't work as a doctor again. The man whom I loved had moved on with another girl. Of course, I couldn't expect to see him waiting for me all his life after what I did to him. I got tagged as characterless, but then I couldn't blame anyone again. It's all my fault. Finally, I'm here standing as a failure," said Chytra.

"You will get your happiness soon, Chythu. I'll make sure that both of us get our happiness. You can happily live with your Arjun while I'll live with my Maya. Not only that, we can also rule their family in just a few more days. I'll make everything alright", Rajesh thought in his mind.

"Anna, where are you lost?" Chytra asked, snapping her fingers.

"Umm, nothing", said Rajesh.

"Did she tell you what to do next?" Chytra asked him.

"No. I'm waiting for her words, so that we can plan our next move", said Rajesh.

"What about Arun? I mean after your broken engagement you were in relationship with Arun, right? Why?" Rajesh asked her.

Chytra sighed. What could she say to him now? She did everything as she said. She really didn't have any idea about Arun and his father's illegal business. When she came to know, she was horrified to learn of his deeds.

"I'll tell you some other time. But tell me, for how many days were you in a relationship with that girl? And tell me one thing: how did you fall in love with her? She is dusky and didn't even have a perfect body. How on earth did you and Avinav fall in love with that ugly girl?" Chytra said, making faces.

She never liked Maya from the start. And her hatred grew as she saw the bond she shared with Arjun.But her hatred has multiplied tenfold since she discovered she had abandoned her brother.

"You know right, love is blind. I thought she was good at heart as she is Arjun's sister. So, I proposed to her. She said that she needed some time. After a few days, she accepted my proposal. I used to go to Hyderabad to meet her. We though we would tell everyone about our relationship after your engagement, as we didn't want to spoil your day. But your engagement broke, and after a few days, she broke up with me, saying that she wanted to take revenge for what you did with Arjun", Rajesh said, cooking up the story he practised to tell everyone.

The author fumed and thought, "Love is not blind, you dumb head. And how dare that sister of yours say that my Mayu is ugly? She is ugly. Her character is ugly, and your entire family is ugly. Just because of stupid people like you, now a days, everyone is mocking love without understanding its purity and blissfulness."

Kishore, who had returned from meeting his son-in-law, Vikas, stood rooted at the door, listening to the brother-sister duo's conversation. Vyshali had a miscarriage three days ago, and the doctor said that it was because of the stress. Again, the whole family, except Kishore and Vyshali, blamed Maya. Vikas, who went to another city on a meeting, was shattered on knowing that his baby was no more.

Flashback:

Vikas, along with his parents, came to see Vyshali, who was in the hospital.

As soon as Vyshali saw her husband, she burst out crying and said, "I'm sorry, Vikas. I couldn't protect our baby."

"Didn't I tell you not to take the stress, Vyshu? It's all happening because of that girl who left Rajesh? Seeing him heartbroken, you took unnecessary stress. See what happened now", Gowri said, consoling her daughter.

Vyshali shut her eyes. She knew her mother was wrong, but didn't bother to correct her. On the other hand, the Vikas family didn't like the way Gowri threw blame on someone else.

"It's good that my baby left this world", said Vikas, making everyone gasp.

"What? Why are you looking at me like that? Did I say something wrong? My baby is lucky that he left the world before he came into this cruel world. He will definitely be born again into a good family. All these days, I'm worried about him/her. Now I can relax because, who knows, you might have taught him/her to be greedy, selfish, heartless, and, most importantly, to destroy innocent lives like you and your siblings. Yes, I'm sad that I couldn't look at him/her for the last time, but I'm happy that he is not going to be part of this stupid family", Vikas said, with a smile on his face.

Kishore's heart clenched, listening to him, but he knew whatever he said was right. His grandchild is safe.

Vyshali closed her eyes in pain.

"And get ready to sign the divorce papers. If I've been with you till now, it's because of the baby. Now that my baby has decided to leave you, then why should I have a relationship with you?" As soon as those words slipped out of Vikas's mouth, Vyshali felt the ground slipping from under her feet.

"What are you saying, Vikas?" Vyshali asked, mustering up the courage.

"I said what you heard", Vikas said, rolling his eyes.

"Why don't you say anything, attayya and mavayya? Didn't you listen to what he said a while ago? At least you guys make him understand", Vyshali asked, looking at her in-laws.

"Oh! You remember them? I thought you had forgotten about them. When all these years, their existence didn't matter to you, now why are you asking for their help now?"

Listening to her father's words, Vyshali shut her mouth. Yes, it's Kishore who said those words, not Vikas.

"Have you ever considered them as your in-laws? You never treated them with respect, but they never said a word, thinking that one day you would change and understand their value. Did they ever mock you for not having a child even after five years of marriage? I stood by your family side when your sister made a mistake. No, it's a sin. Even though you said that you wanted to stay with your family as they were going through tough times, I didn't say anything. But why are they going through that? Aren't your sister and brother responsible for that? I thought your mother would make you understand the mistakes you have made. Instead, she was supporting and mocking the others, when she had to mock herself for not showing the right path. Even after all the things happened, I stood with you and supported you. But I lost hope in us a long time ago. If I'm with you till now, then it's because of the baby. Now when my baby left, why should I have a relationship with you?" Said Vikas.

Vyshali was crying silently. Vikas parents didn't have anything to say, because at the end, Vyshali would mock them even if they said good words. So, they remained silent. Kishore felt pity for his daughter.

He thought in his mind, "She definitely doesn't deserve this man."

Saying that, Vikas and his family walked out and Kishore followed them ignoring his wife and Vyshali.

"Vikas", Kishore called his son-in-law.

Vikas gestured to his mother and father to leave. Both of them moved to the lawn of the hospital.

"Uncle, if you are here to convince me about my decision, then I'm sorry. I've thought many times before taking this decision", said Vikas, with a stern face.

"And I'm not here to convince you too. I'm here to say sorry on behalf of my family. You have always balanced your duties as a son, husband and son-in-law, but the same doesn't apply to my daughter. I wish I have taken things into my hands before only. Things would have been different then. Anyways, all the best for your future. No matter what, don't forget this father-in-law of yours", Kishore said, patting Vikas's shoulder.

Vikas smiled at the elder man in front of him and left the hospital.

Gowri, who came after giving milk to Vyshali, looked at Kishore, who was standing at Rajesh's room door. She gulped and immediately shouted Rajesh and Chytra's names.

Kishore left the place immediately. Vyshali, Rajesh, and Chytra came out of their rooms. Kishore also moved towards the living room.

As soon as Gowri saw Rajesh and Chytra, she slapped them. Vyshali was crying silently looking at them while Kishore was consoling her.

"Just because of both of you, today her married life was destroyed." She said, pointing Vyshali who was crying."And also, because of her blind love towards both of you. She destroyed her marriage with her bare hands."

"Amma, what did we do? And what happened?" Rajesh asked his mother.

"Stop Rajesh. Just stop it. Your bava sent divorce papers to your sister. He cut all his ties with this family. He supported our family during the time of Chytra's mishap, even though he knew the fault was on our side. And now again, both of you were plotting to destroy a girl's life without any mistake of hers. He warned her not to support you guys. But she didn't listen, and she came here, leaving her husband and her in-laws. It's been months since she came here. He tried his best to convince her, but she wouldn't listen. And his patience broke with the stunt she pulled last time. So, he decided to divorce her. And I don't think he has done anything wrong. Just answer me. Why are you guys doing all this? I never thought you would do something like this. I thought I had given you a good upbringing. But every time you guys prove me wrong. Why? Why are you doing this to us and to them?" Gauri yelled at Rajesh.

"Amma, you don't know anything. You don't know how cheap she is. She used my brother and left him. And now she has trapped Avinav. You don't know how depressed my brother is. Who knows how many men she has entrapped with her charms till now? And who knows with whom she has slept", Chytra said, annoyed

She fell on the ground because of the huge slap given by her father. She got up and placed her hand on her cheek.

She looked at her father angrily and asked,"Did you just slap me because of that bitch, nanna?"

"Don't you dare raise your voice in front of me? And look who is talking about trapping men. You don't even have the right to talk about her. What did you say? She used your brother and left him. Why don't you ask your brother the truth? Chi, I'm ashamed of myself for having children like you both. Chytra, are you even a girl? And you, Mr. Rajesh, you still didn't say the truth to your sister", Kishore yelled at his daughter.

"Anna, just tell them the truth. Then, they will understand your pain. Tell them what that bitch did to you", said Chytra.

"Just stop it, Chytra. Just stop!" Vyshali shouted at the top of her voice."Both of you just stop your wicked plans to destroy Maya's marriage. Maya is innocent. She didn't accept Rajesh at all. She rejected him the moment he proposed to her. She neither took the gifts sent by him nor met him once whenever he went to her college. She never demanded anything from him. It was him who built his hopes high. It was he who harassed her mentally every day. He was the one who snatched her peace and made false allegations against her. It's him who made her the culprit in front of her parents. It's him who made her look low in front of you. Even though I knew the truth, I became selfish for my brother's happiness and became one of the reasons for her pain." Her voice got cracked by the end.

"What the hell, akka? It's all rubbish. Anna, did you listen to what akka was saying?" Said Chytra

"She is saying the truth, Chythu", Rajesh said, bowing his head down.

Chytra stared at her brother in disbelief.

She thought that Maya was taking revenge on her brother for what she did to Arjun. That's why she supported her brother all this time.

"What are you saying, Anna?" Chytra asked him, coming out of shock.

"Akka is saying the truth. She never accepted my proposal. It's me who did all those horrendous things to her", said Rajesh.

"Then why did you lie to me? You could have told me the truth", Chytra asked him.

"For you", said Rajesh.

"What?" Chytra asked him, confused.

"I thought that if I put Maya as the culprit, then her parents would get her married to me. And then, I could put a condition that Arjun had to marry you if I had to marry Maya", said Rajesh.

Everyone stood there, shocked, listening to him.

"Then you and I could get married to the people we love", said Rajesh.

Chytra just couldn't believe what her brother was saying, while Vyshali closed her eyes in pain. She became the reason for an innocent girl's pain. She still remembers the look on Maya's face when her parents trusted them over Maya. And now, she is receiving punishment. God has snatched her baby from her, and her husband left her. A thought ran through her mind. Did her brother really love Maya? No one wants to see the person they love in pain, but her brother is the reason for the pain that Maya has gone through. Gowri left to her room and Vyshali moved to hers silently.

"I hope you have realised what you have done? If you still haven't learned your lessons, then get ready to pay for the sins you have committed." Kishore went to his room after saying that.

Chytra sat in her room thinking about her brother's words. Didn't she see the hate in Maya's eyes for her brother? From the start, Maya never liked her brother. Then how could she believe his words when he said her that she loved him? She thought of this before too, but then she thought how much Maya loved Arjun. So, when her brother told her that Maya loved him to take revenge for what she did to Arjun, she blindly believed her brother's words. She sighed. She knew she was not a saint, but after knowing how her brother mentally tortured Maya, she was terrified and felt disgusted with herself for supporting him. But what's the use now? If she goes and tells her parents the truth, she will not like it. Till today she has done everything that is told by her. Did she gain anything? Instead, she lost many precious things in her life.

Meera, Diya, Raman, and Ragini were having their breakfast when Diya's mobile started to buzz.

"Hey, Surya!" Diya said, answering the call.

"Vadina, where is bava? I've been trying to call for an hour. But his mobile is switched off", said Surya.

"He went to Chennai to attend a conference and also a workshop. Is everything okay? You sound tense", Diya asked Surya.

"My babay (chacha/mausa) and pinni (chachi/masi) have come. They are making a ruckus about Akka's engagement", said Surya.

"Surya, everything will be fine. We are starting now. So, don't get tense", said Diya.

"What happened?" Meera asked, as soon as Diya cut the call.

"Taara's biological father and his wife have come, it seems, and also they were making a fuss knowing about her engagement with Anna. He tried to call Anna, but his phone was switched off. So, he called me", said Diya.

"We'll also come along with you", said Ragini.

"Hello, old lady! You and thatha have an appointment with the doctor for your monthly check-up. Don't worry, we are going, right? Everything will be fine. Moreover, Anna is also coming", said Diya.

"Veeru is coming? Isn't he supposed to come tomorrow?" Raman asked her.

"He planned a surprise for Taara as she was angry at him as now-a-days they weren't getting proper time to spend time with each other. So, he quickly finished his work and boarded the flight early in the morning. That's why his mobile was switched off", said Diya.

"Shall we leave or will he come?" Meera asked Diya.

"He will come in ten minutes, maa. He dropped a message as soon as he boarded the flight", said Diya.

Meera nodded her head. They finished their breakfast and sat in the living room waiting for Veeru. Meanwhile, Diya called Harika and told her she would be late.

Meanwhile, at Varma Mansion:

Avinav and Maya entered Varma's mansion and saw Surya's father and grandparents shouting at a man and a woman. Taara was crying in her mother's arms while Surya was looking tense standing beside them. On seeing them, Surya dragged them into the garden.

"Why did you drag us here, Sunny? And what's going on?" Maya asked Surya.

"Who are they, Surya?" Avi asked Surya.

"That man is Taara akka's biological father and my father's younger brother, and the lady is her step-mother", said Surya.

"But, what are they doing here? I mean, your thatha (grandfather) has cut all his ties with him, right?" Maya asked Surya.

"Yeah! They came in the morning and were forcing Taara Akka to marry the guy they choose", said Surya.

"What?" Maya and Avinav shouted in unison, after listening to what Surya said.

"But, why did he come now? After all these years. When he didn't care even a bit about akka till now", Maya asked Surya.

"Wait a minute, is Taara not your own sister?" Avi asked, coming out of shock.

"No, she is my babay's daughter. Pinni (masi/chachi) died during her labour while giving birth to her second baby. Akka was a 5-year-old kid at that time. Unfortunately, the baby too died after a few days. After four months of her demise, Babay married another woman, saying that Taara Akka needed a mother. But she never looked after her. It was always Amma and Nanamma who took care of Akka. That lady, every day, used to make a fuss about one thing or the other. One day, she slapped Akka intentionally. That day, Nanamma and Thatha cut all their ties with them. My mother always wanted a girl, but after my birth, her uterus became weak. So, my mother asked Thatha if she could adopt Akka. My grandparents agreed to it immediately," said Surya.

"Oh! I didn't know that", said Avi.

"But she is already engaged, right?" Said Maya.

"Yeah! Even they knew that. But they want Akka to marry that lady's brother's son so that they can get the property that is in her name", said Surya, controlling his anger.

"Disgusting people. But what can we do now?" Said Avi.

"I don't know, Anna. I tried calling Bava many times, but his phone was switched off", said Surya.

"He went to attend a conference in Chennai", said Avi.

"Why don't we lodge a complaint against them?" Said Maya.

"My grandfather was a retired IPS officer, Mia. Did you forget? Right now, I'm not understanding what to do. Taara Akka hates that woman, and now that woman stepped into this house again without any shame and wants Akka to marry her brother's son. And also, they want to take Tara Akka with them. For two hours, they have been arguing with us." Surya was about to speak further when they heard Surya's mother shouting Taara's name.

They immediately ran inside and saw Taara lying unconscious in her mother's arms. Maya sat beside her and patted Taara's cheeks. She asked Surya to bring water. She rubbed her palms while Niranjana rubbed her legs. Surya sprinkled some water on her face, but she didn't wake up. Laxmi was crying, looking at her granddaughter lying unconscious.

Maya again sprinkled some water on Taara's face and tapped her face. This time, Taara opened her eyes slowly. Niranjana hugged Taara tightly, as if she would disappear if she left her. Taara too hugged her tight and broke down in her mother's arms. Niranjana may not have given birth to her, but she has always pampered and fulfilled every wish of hers.

"I'm fine, Amma. Please don't cry." Taara said, wiping her mother's tears off. "You know right, I hate tears in your eyes. And you look like a zombie if you cry."

Niranjana laughed a little and slapped Taara's arm.

Niranjana cupped Taara's cheeks and kissed her forehead and said, "Never pull this stunt on me. I have already lost my Roshini, and I can't lose my star too."

"Never. I'm your strong Taara, right?" She said, kissing her mother's cheeks and hugging her tightly. Soon, Srinivas and Surya joined the hug.

Maya hugged Avi, seeing the love between them. No-one could say that Taara was adopted. Niranjana and Srinivas have always loved Taara as their own daughter. Maybe they love her a little more than Surya.

"If your family drama is over, then we can continue our pending talks", Madhu said, rolling her eyes.

Taara stood up slowly, with the support of her brother and mother, and said,"There is nothing to talk about, old lady. Just get out of my house before I call the cops here.

"Taara, is this the way you talk to your mother?" Manohar scolded Taara.

"Which mother are you talking about? If you are talking about my Roshini Amma, then she died long ago. And the lady who is standing beside you is your wife, and I don't have any relationship with you or your family", Taara said, sternly.

"I'm your father, Taara", Manohar said, raising his voice.

"My parents are right here with me." She said, pointing at Srinivas and Niranjana."Where were you when I needed you? Where were you when I was crying for the loss of my mother? Where were you when I needed your guidance? Where were you when your lovely wife was torturing me? Where were you when I woke up in the middle of the night with a nightmare? Where were you when I needed the warmth of my father?" She yelled at Manohar and continued,"Shall I say? You're preoccupied with your second wife, and you've completely forgotten that you have a child to care for. You were busy fulfilling her wishes and forgot that there was a kid who was seeking your attention. You are not my father. You are just the younger son of my grandfather. You died for me the day you never stood up for me when this lady slapped me for no mistake of mine."

"Whatever it is, you can't change the fact that he is your biological father, and you have to marry the person we choose, otherwise." Said Madhu.

Otherwise, what will you do, Mrs. Manohar?

Everyone looked at the source of the voice and saw Veeru standing at the entrance with his family.

As soon as Taara saw him, she immediately ran towards him and flung into his arms, saying,"I love you, Veer."

Veeru kissed her forehead lovingly, assuring her that he was not going to leave her, and said,"Love you too, my Estela."

Diya and Meera came inside, leaving the love-birds.

Veeru broke the hug and looked at Madhu, asking her,"What will you do if she doesn't marry the person you choose? And with what right are you ordering her?"

"She is her mother, Mr. Murty," said Manohar.

That's when a slap landed on his cheek by his mother. He looked at her in shock because it was the first time she had slapped him till now.

"Just get out of my house before I do something terrible. Till today, I thought that one day you'd change your mind and come here. But from today onwards, you are dead to me. I only have one son. Dare you pull any stunt? I'll make sure you both rot in jail", Laxmi said, glaring at her younger son.

Manohar and Madhu left the house, unable to bear the humiliation. They do know the power of Janardhan. He is a retired IPS officer and is well-known for his tactics in handling criminals.

They were all sitting there debating what to do. When Avi cleared his throat and said,"If you guys don't mind, I think it would be better if we got them married soon. So that there won't be any problems in future."

All nodded their heads positively. Everyone's faces broke into a smile after the chaos. Surya and Maya hugged Taara tightly from the both sides and congratulated her and teased her a lot.
While others shook their heads as they stared at the crazy best-friends duo.

Diya smiled, looking at her brother and to be sister-in-law.

"Then we will go to our Kuldevi's temple after two days", said Janardhan.

"As you say, Pedananna garu", said Meera.

"Then inform Arjun's family too about the same", said Janaki.

Meera nodded her head positively. They talked for some more time and left.

Aasha was sitting in her room caressing her belly, and thinking about the past.

Aasha was sitting in her room crying incoherently. Prem who entered Aasha's room, got tense looking at her.

"Aasha, what happened? Why are you crying?" Prem asked, going towards her.

"Annaya, Arun is a cheater. He tried to molest me. If Ajay hadn't come at the right time, I didn't know what would have happened", Aasha said, hugging her brother.

"How dare he? Ajay always warned us about Arun, but we never took his words seriously", Prem said, regretting.

"Anna, he is planning something big with someone else to spoil Arjun's engagement. I heard him talking to someone on his phone. I didn't know who that person was, but we have to stop him before he get succeeds with his plan", said Aasha.

"But, how could we know what he was planning?" Prem asked her.

"That person is a girl. I have found his behaviour strange for the past two weeks. So, I tried to confront him. That's when I heard him talking to that person, saying how they made a full proof plan for the downfall of Arjun. I immediately left the place without meeting him. After two days, I decided to meet him and get that number. Before going to Arun's place, I dropped a message to Ajay. I don't know why, but he told me to wear the smart locket. When I reached Arun's house, he was drunk and was making out with another girl", Aasha said, with anger and disgust dripping in her voice."That girl ran away when she saw me. He slapped me and scolded me saying that I disturbed his moments. He told me that I was nothing, but a pawn to destroy you, Ajay, and Arjun. I decided to leave, but he grabbed my hand and showed my morphed pictures. I didn't understand anything, and I was blank for a moment. Taking it as a chance, he tried to force himself on me. I tried my best to dodge him and managed to run to the washroom. I locked myself in it and sent an SOS alert to Ajay. He tried to break the door and almost succeeded. At the same time, Ajay came along with his guards and saved me", Aasha said, crying bitterly.

"When did this happen?" Prem asked sternly.

"Three days ago", Aasha said, meekly.

"And you are telling me now", Prem yelled at her.

"I'll kill that bastard. How dare he play this nasty game with us and try to force himself on you?" Prem said, gritting his teeth.

"Anna, Arjun's engagement is in two days. We don't have much time. We need to act quickly before everything slips out of our hands", said Aasha.

Prem nodded his head reluctantly. He was worried with all the happenings.

"Those photos?" He asked Aasha.

"Ajay said that he would ask Avi Anna's help as his friend knows hacking", said Aasha.

Prem nodded his head and said, "You take rest. We need to leave in the evening to Arjun's village."

Aasha sighed, looking at her brother, and said, "I'm okay, Anna."

Prem gave her a small smile and kissed her forehead before leaving her room.

As soon as Prem left the room, she called Ajay.

"I was about to call you, Aasha. Veeru anna successfully deleted all his photos from that bastard's devices. But what about the hard copies he had?" Said Ajay.

"I destroyed all of them that day", said Aasha.

"Are you sure? Didn't he have any more photos of yours, right?" Ajay asked her.

"I found drugs in his room, Ajay", Aasha said, making Ajay shocked.

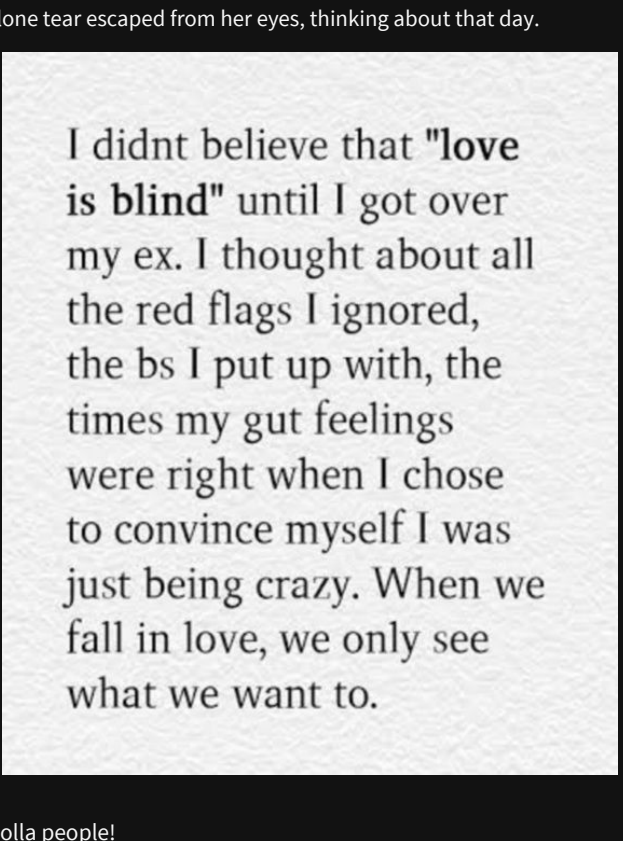
"What the hell are you saying?" Ajay asked her.

"On that day, when he fell unconscious, I searched through all his closets for those photos. I found a suitcase with some powdered packets. It didn't take me much time to realise what they were", said Aasha.

"Bye, Aasha, I'll talk to you later. Prem is calling", said Ajay.

Aasha cut the call and lied down on the bed.

A lone tear escaped from her eyes, thinking about that day.



I didnt believe that **"love is blind"** until I got over my ex. I thought about all the red flags I ignored, the bs I put up with, the times my gut feelings were right when I chose to convince myself I was just being crazy. When we fall in love, we only see what we want to.

Holla people!

I guess, after a long time. Well, I'm not going to start my "sorry" chant once again. I'm busy with my work and I mostly get stuck as I start to write. As you all know, this is not a pre-planned story; I just have the idea of a plot. So, I was facing issues getting the right set of words.

Anyway, this chapter is 6000+ words. The longest chapter I've written till date.

I hope you guys like it.

Don't forget to leave your lovely comments.

Keep smiling and take care🤍

.

.

.

Wait, wait. Guess what? The wedding bells are going to ring soon. So, stay tuned.

Thank you for reading!
VOTE · COMMENT · SHARE
@Kiran72

Continue reading next part ☐