

Author's POV:

The next morning, Diya came down, looking as fresh as a flower. She saw Revathi, Radha, and Gayatri sitting in the living room making garlands with jasmine and wild marjoram.

"Did you guys have your juice?" Diya asked, sitting beside them.

"Yes! We had juice and also our meds," said Revathi.

"Good, is this for God or for us?" She asked, taking a small stem of marjoram and some jasmine flowers into her hand.

"It's not for God," said Gayatri.

Diya grinned and smelled them. She loves jasmine, of all the flowers. During her childhood, her grandmother used to make garlands with jasmine and then she used to style her hair with garla.

Radha chuckled, looking at Diya. Diya reminded her of her daughter, Sarika. Her daughter is clumsy and a kid at heart. The food cooked by her was a total disaster. She still remembers how Sarika messed up the whole kitchen once. It was Mother's Day, and Radha wanted to cook something for her mother. So, she stepped into the kitchen, much to Radha's dislike. Raghu went to help his daughter. Both of them spoiled her kitchen in the name of cooking. From that day, she never allowed Sarika to step into her kitchen. Even a er her marriages, if they were in Chennai, Dhurpa (Narayan's mother) and Narayan used to cook, or else Narayan and Radha used to cook.

Radha shook her head slowly to control her emotions. Her eyes glistened, thinking about her daughter's family. She wiped o the lone tear before someone could notice her.

"Diya, come here," said Radha.

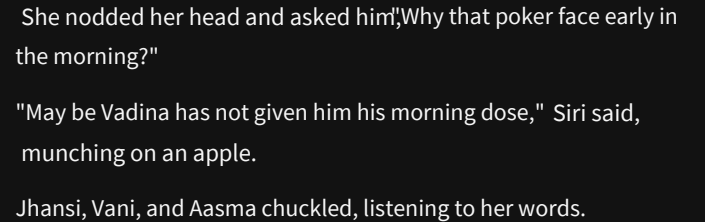
Diya went and kneeled down in front of Diya.

"Turn around," said Radha.

Diya turned and sat on the floor.

"Didn't you wipe your hair properly? They are still damp," said Radha.

She then took two gattaras and styled them in a half-moon shape on Diya's hair.



"Now, go and wake up Arjun," Radha said, patting her cheek.

Diya nodded her head and moved to the kitchen to make co ee for him.

Diya entered their room and saw Arjun sleeping happily on his stomach. His one leg was swaying in the air while half of the quilt rolled around his body while the remaining was lying on the floor. His one hand was under the pillow and the other one was hugging another pillow close to his heart.

"He calls me clumsy, but look how weirdly he is sleeping," Diya mumbled, looking at Arjun.

Suddenly, she got a wicked idea. She placed the co ee mug on the night stand, which was on the le side of the bed. She moved to the bathroom and filled the water jug with cold water. She came out and smirked, looking at him who was busy sleeping while drooling. She counted 1-10 numbers. "Splash." She emptied the whole jug of water on him. Arjun sat on the bed with a jerk as the cold water hit his body.

"Finally, I've taken my revenge." Saying that, she ran out of the room before he could process everything.

On the other hand, Arjun sat on the bed in a daze. At first, he didn't understand what happened and then the realisation hit him that Diya threw water on him to wake him up. He flared his nose and looked around, but she had escaped a long time ago. Cursing her mentally, he took the quilt with him and put it in the hamper. He changed the sheets on the bed and put the used ones in the hamper. He grabbed his towel and moved to the bathroom.

A er some time, he came down with the co ee mug and directly moved to the kitchen to reheat the co ee and it became cold. He entered the kitchen and saw his sisters and aunts cooking in the kitchen with the help of maids.

"Akka, heat this co ee," Arjun said, giving the co ee mug to Arpita.

She nodded her head and asked him, "Why that poker face early in the morning?"

"May be Vadina has not given him his morning dose," Siri said, munching on an apple.

Jhansi, Vani, and Aasma chuckled, listening to her words.

"You little rat, stop watching those stupid dramas. They are spoiling you," Arjun said, glaring at Siri.

Maya and Arpita giggled, looking at Siri's face as she had opened her mouth like a fish, listening to the "little rat."

"Close your mouth, little rat," Maya said, teasing her.

Siri glared at Maya, and yelled at Arjun, "How dare you call me 'little rat,' you Gira e?"

"Sorry, you are not a little rat."

Siri smiled, listening to him, but the next moment her smile had dropped and she was throwing daggers at him with her eyes.

"You are a squirrel. Look how you are biting that apple with your little teeth," Arjun said, running out of the kitchen.

Siri ran behind him, making the others burst into laughter.

"Anna, I'll not leave you," Siri said, running behind him.

"Catch me if you can, little squirrel," Arjun said, while running.

While running, she bumped into Nandan, who was coming from his morning jog.

"What happened? Why are you hopping around the house like a kangaroo?" Nandan asked Siri.

"Argh! I'm neither a rat or squirrel, nor a kangaroo. Stop calling me with the names of animals," Siri said, flaring her nose.

"I'm sorry, my little sister. You are not a kangaroo, but a chudail." Saying that, Nandan ran towards his room.

Siri stomped her feet in anger and sat beside Diya, who was feeding idli to Vansh and Varsha.

"What happened, Siri?" Diya asked, looking at Siri.

"Your husband and brother-in-law are teasing me," Siri said, making an angry pout.

Diya chuckled, listening to her, and said, "You irritate them back."

"Vadina, let's play a prank on them," Siri said, smiling mischievously.

Varsha looked at them, narrowing her eyes, and said, "Let mama."

"Go and tell them. We are not afraid of them," Diya said, while stung in her mouth with another piece of idli.

"Vadina, I'm thinking of going to an ice-cream parlour in the evening. Will you join me?" Siri said, looking at Diya.

"Of course. Will you join us, Vansh?" Diya asked Vansh, to which he bobbed his head cutely while chewing idli lazily.

Varsha looked at them from the corner of her eyes and asked, "Me?"

"Your Mamu's will take you," Siri said, smiling cheekily.

"I will come," said Varsha.

"So, we will play pranks on them and you are not going to tell them about it," said Diya.

"Okay!" Said Varsha.

"Pinky promise," Diya said, forwarding her hand.

"Pinky plomish (promise)," Varsha said, pinching her throat cutely.

A er feeding breakfast to Vansh and Varsha, the four of them moved to Arjun and Diya's room.

Siri was standing at the door, making sure that no one caught them.

Diya took two packets of Oreos and a jar.

"Lick the cream, but don't eat the biscuits," Diya said, giving them Oreos.

Varsha and Vansh grinned, listening to her, and their eyes twinkled with happiness. They happily licked o the cream from the biscuits.

Diya moved to the bathroom and brought the tooth paste.

She put toothpaste on biscuits and joined them and put them in the jar. She closed the lid and placed the jar on the night stand. Then she searched for something in her bag. She grinned, looking at the small box that has paper bugs and some toy spiders and lizards.

"Shall we go?" Diya asked Vansh and Varsha.

Four of them were going towards Nandan's room when Zaheer stopped them.

"Where are you going?" Zaheer asked them.

"Nothing Mamu, we're coming down," Diya said before the two little ones ruined their plan.

"Do you want me to believe you?" Zaheer asked, raising his eyebrow at him.

"We play plank (prank) on Mama," Varsha said, being honest.

The other three were glaring at her for spilling out the truth.

"Is it? Who is that 'Bali ka bakra'?" Zaheer asked them.

"Nandu mamu, Aju mamu," Varsha said, like a tarot parrot.

"Mamu, we will talk with you later. Now please excuse us," said Diya, picking up Varsha in her arms.

"You little devil, why did you say the truth to Dadu?" Diya asked Varsha.

"Amma, tell no lies," Varsha said, pouting cutely.

Diya slapped her bum and said, "Then did you tell her about our secret ice-cream date last week?"

"Amma scolds me," said Varsha.

"Acha, someone was telling us that we shouldn't lie. So, why don't you go and tell her the truth?" Diya said, sarcastically.

"Chorry," Varsha said, holding her ears cutely.

"Now, we can't play a prank on Nandu Anna, as he went to his room. So, we will do it some other time. Let's go now before someone gets suspicious of us," said Siri.

With that, four of them le downstairs and joined the others.

A er having breakfast, Varsha and Vansh were playing with Vikram in the playroom, and a worker was looking a er them while others were in the living room. Aashi and her grandparents went to Chowdary Mansion. Meena and her family le for their houses a er breakfast. Ajay and Prem's families le for their houses last night. Murthy's and Varma's were at their respective homes.

Harinath and Raghunath were watching the news. Shekar and Vani were in the study attending a client call. Jai, Rishi, Raghav, and Zaheer were talking about business and politics. Revathi, Radha, and Gayatri were gossiping. Janaki, Sakshi, Jhansi, Aasma, and Arjali were talking about fashion and about their respective jobs. The youngsters were pulling each other's legs and having fun. Everyone is in their world when an old lady in her early eighties came inside.

Everyone's faces paled, looking at her. Raghav and Janaki stood rooted in their places. Jhansi nudged Raghav, to which he came out of his thoughts. He went towards her and took her blessings along with Jhansi while greeting her. Next, Janaki and Jai did the same. Sravya, Arpita, and Arjun made a poker face looking at her.

"Why did she come now?" Arpita whispered in Sravya's ears.

"How would I know that, Vadina? I didn't even have any idea that she was coming just like you," Sravya whispered in Arpita's ears.

"Bava, do we have to go and take her blessings now?" Siri, who was sitting in between Yash and Avi, asked them.

"It's better to sit here rather than take her so-called blessings," said Avi, making the others chuckle.

"If she hears that, she will kill you with her glares," said Maya.

"I'm not afraid of that lady. Are you guys scared of her?" Avi asked, looking at others.

"No. But I don't like her presence around us," Arpita said, making faces.

"As if we love to spend time with her," said Sravya.

Arjali, who was sitting near them, gestured to them to be silent.

"How are you, Mani?" Gayatri greeted that lady.

"Good," that lady said, with a stern face.

"Did you know that she is coming?" Sakshi asked her husband.

"No. If I had known, then I would have warned everyone, right?" said Rishi.

"Now, let's go and take her blessings before she makes a big fuss," said Sakshi.

"How are you, Chinnamma?" Sakshi asked her.

"Hmmm," that lady said, nodding her head.

Sakshi made a face, looking at her arrogance.

She then looked around and scanned the whole room and asked, "Where is the newly wedded couple?"

Arjun, Diya, come here," Janaki said, looking at the couple.

Diya stood confused, looking at the new face.

"She is my grandfather's step-sister. She is too strict and orthodox. Be careful around her," Arjun whispered in her ears.

"Kids these days have no shame," that lady said, throwing a disgusting look at the couple looking at their closeness, making others fume.

Diya gave her a nervous smile and went towards her along with Arjun. Both of them took her blessings and stood beside her.

"Go and bring co ee for me," she ordered Diya.

"She is not your servant to order," Arjun said, gritting his teeth.

Diya held his hand to calm him down.

"Look, how this chit of a girl has kept him wrapped around her little finger. Didn't I tell you that my Chytra is best for him?" Said that lady.

Zaheer was fuming, listening to that lady while Aasma was trying to calm him down.

(Before you read further, let me introduce this lady. She is Nagamani, the step-sister of Raghav and Janaki's father. Nagamani is cousin of Chytra's grandmother. She is arrogant, orthodox and feels as if she possesses everything in the world. She is in her early eighties and has a son and a daughter. Her son is a drunkard and a big casino who died a few years ago in an accident, and it was a drunk and his case. Her daughter is a good lady and doesn't like her mother's attitude. She tries her best to keep her family away from this woman so that her children don't turn out like her. Nagamani wanted Janaki to marry her son, but that didn't happen. She then tried to hitch her daughter with Raghav, but her own daughter poured water on her plans. Later, she tried to hook up Gopal with Raghav, but even that didn't happen. She wants to have the upper hand above everyone and wants people around her to dance to her tunes.)

"Wahi! What a good upbringing you have given your children, Janaki. One is back answering me and the other one didn't take my blessings," said Nagamani.

"Well, my daughter has given them a good upbringing and taught them values, unlike you. She taught them to respect the elderly. That's why you are still sitting here; otherwise my grandson would have thrown you out of this mansion a long time ago," Revathi said, with a tight-lipped smile.

Everyone controlled their smiles, listening to her. Jai and Raghav were glaring at that woman who was sitting in their house and insulting them. If not for their wives, then they would have lashed out on the woman and given her le and fight.

Rishi and Shekar sighed and thought, "This woman didn't even change a bit."

"Raghav, why are you not saying anything when that lady is insulting your aunt? Do you know how much your father loved and respected me? In fact, he used to love me more than his own sister. And this is what you repay me for taking care of you guys when your mother died? You didn't even bother to invite me to your grandson's wedding," Nagamani said, making a crying face.

"Excuse me, what did you say? You took care of us when our mother passed away. That would be the best joke I've ever heard in my life. Though I might have been just a seven-year-old kid when my father passed away, I still remembered how you told my father to marry again and leave us at my mom's maternal home. It was my father who took care of me and my two-year-old little sister. He was the one who used to cook food for us, feed us, sing a lullaby for us, and put us to sleep. He was the one who su ered the most. He used to wake up early in the morning and cook food for three of us, as your step-sister and step-mother refused to cook food for us. Taking my sister along with him. He started to drink, looking at his family's behaviour towards us. He thought his family would support him a er the loss of his wife, but what did you guys do? You put salt to his wounds. I've seen him cry a er putting us to bed. You guys didn't want to see our faces or my father's death, refused to take care of us. Do you think that I don't know anything? Then you are wrong. I don't know how you treated my mother when she was alive because I was just five years old when she passed away. But I've seen my father's pain and I didn't forget anything. Just because I'm not saying anything doesn't mean I'm not taking everything that you say. I'm respecting you looking at your age. By the way, if you were the one who took care of us, then why did my father make my uncles and aunts the legal guardians of us?" Raghav said, pouring out all his anger and pain.

Janaki was the most a ected one of all. She was just a two-year-old kid when her mother passed away. When she was around twelve years old, she asked her brother why no-one from her father's family came to see them or why they wouldn't go and visit their grandmother and aunt. That's when Raghav told her that their father's family refused to take care of her and him, a er her father's demise. But she didn't know all these things. Maybe her brother didn't want to know about all these things. The only person who knew all this, apart from Raghav, was Jhansi.

Revathi knew that her brother-in-law loved her sister, Vaidhehi, a lot. A er her demise, even they suggested him to marry again a er seeing his struggles with bringing up two children. But he denied them, saying that he could not imagine anyone in Vaidhehi's place. A er that, they didn't bring up that topic again. Gopal's family wouldn't let him enter the house. They threw out all the belongings of Raghav and Janaki and cut their ties with them. Shiva, Prasad, Madhu, and Harinath were furious, but they stopped themselves from looking at the two innocent souls. They took Raghav and Janaki with them. Raghav and Janaki grew up with their cousins, and they never missed their parents.

Nagamani squirmed in her seat, listening to Raghav. She knew whatever he said was cent percent true. But she is not a woman who easily accepts her mistakes.

"You have done a good job of filling their ears against us, Revathi," she said, without any shame.

Raghav chuckled and said, "You will not accept your mistakes, right? They never said anything about you, be it positive or negative. I've read my father's diary, which he gave to me a week before his demise. In that, he wrote everything about his family, so that me and sister could understand how manipulative and selfish his family was."

Nagamani didn't have anything to say now.

She thought for a while and said, "I'm just angry that you refused Chytra to become the daughter-in-law of this house."

Janaki, who was lost in her thoughts, composed herself and said sternly, "We didn't reject her. She herself broke the engagement and put the blame on my son for no mistake of his. And I'm glad that a girl like her is out of my son's and ours life. So, if you are here to talk about the past, then I think you know the way to the door."

Nagamani fumed, listening to her words while the others were just silent spectators. She was expecting someone to support her.

"She was just a child. Didn't you forgive your grandmother and aunt a er what they did to you? So, why can't you forgive her?" Said Nagamani.

"Thank God that she is not in jail for playing with my husband's life. She mixed drugs in Arjun's food without anyone's notice and made a false accusation against him. She made him stand in front of the world as a playboy, a drug addict, and a womanizer. She played with his dignity, self-respect, feelings, and life. And you want us to forgive her," Diya said, sternly while glaring at that old lady.

"Aye, don't speak rubbish when you don't know anything," said Nagamani

"I knew everything. I've seen his struggle to come out of the trauma. I've seen him blaming himself for bringing disgrace to his family. I've seen him struggling for his life on the hospital bed. I've seen him lock himself up in his room and destroy himself. I've seen him lose faith in his life and love. So, it would be better if you stop this matter here," Diya said, making that lady shut her mouth.

Everyone looked at Diya proudly. Arjun has tears in his eyes listening to her.

"I hope you got all your answers, Nagamani. If you are here to talk about Chytra or her family, then you can leave this house at this moment. Don't take advantage of our kindness. We definitely know how to show someone their place. So, think a thousand times before you do and speak something," Harinath said, strictly.

"Show me my room," Nagamani said, getting up from her seat.

Everyone shook their heads. No one was happy with her stay.

The youngsters frowned, looking at her and thought, "Didn't she have any shame?"

Everyone sighed in relief as she le for her room.

"I'm sorry on her behalf, Diya. Please don't take her words. She is like that, only a self-centred lady. Don't do anything's she orders you or tries to show her rights to you. She is my father's step-sister who realised our existence a er seeing our fame and money," said Janaki.

"You don't need to apologize, Didi. Some people are like that only and they don't accept their mistakes easily because of their ego," said Zaheer.

"Haa, attayya. Mamu is right. Why are you apologising when she was the one who shouted at me? Don't worry, I'll be cautious around her and I know how to treat people like them," said Diya, making others smile.

They were glad that Diya was a part of their family.

"Go and rest for some time. You and Arjun have to go to Murty Mansion in the evening," said Janaki.

"Yeah, sleep as much as you want now because you won't be able to sleep the coming nights," Maya teased Diya.

"Why can't I sleep properly?" But she stopped in the middle, realising Maya's words, and her cheeks became red.

"Umm, I've got some work." Saying that, she ran towards her room.

Arjun looked at her confused, as he still didn't get what Maya said.

"What happened to her? Why did she run away like that?" asked Arjun.

Avi and Yash hit their heads, while Nandan giggled, looking at her brother. The Elders shook their heads and le from there.

"Because you are a tube light," Nandan said, while Arjun glared at him.

"Tonight is your first night, my stupid dear brother-in-law," Avi and Yash said together.

"What? Why has no-one informed me about this?" Arjun yelled at them.

The girls looked at him weirdly and went from there, shaking their heads in disbelief. Nandan too went from there as he had to submit his assignments a er two days.

"Don't you know that the first night will be held a er marriage?" Yash remarked sarcastically.

"Umm, I know. But why this early?" Arjun said, making Yash and Avi look at him strangely.

"Then, do you want to celebrate your first night on Shashipooarti (60th birthday)?" Avi said, sco ing.

"What, no?" Yelled Arjun.

"Why are you shouting like a chimpanzee? We are neither on another planet nor deaf," Yash said, getting irritated with his behavior.

"Leave that idiot alone for some time," Avi said, dragging Yash with him.

Hey guys!!

Did anyone do that Oreo prank on you yet?

Let's see how the prank turns out.

Well, I didn't plan this lady's character at the start. But she came out of nowhere. Don't worry, I'll shoo her away a er two or three chapters.

And, let's see how their first night turns out.

I hope you guys liked the update. Don't forget to comment your views about the update. It helps me to make the story better.

Keep smiling and take care!

