

## The Secrets Of Meera by Flameillumination Chapter 3

“Where is she?” Neha said to herself while searching for Meera in the sea of people exiting the arrival gate at terminal 4 of JFK International Airport. It was late Saturday summer afternoon, and she was eagerly waiting for her beloved senior to arrive. So many years had passed since they were studying in the same college and staying in the same hostel. Neha was two years junior to Meera. She moved to the US after her graduation but kept in touch with her favourite senior. The big bouquet in her hands was getting heavier with every passing minute.

Unanticipatedly her phone rang.

“Did she arrive?” The voice from the phone enquired.

“No Vivek, her flight has landed but she is still inside.”

“Maybe she got delayed in processing. She also has to get her bags. Be patient, your Di is not going to get lost in an airport,” said Vivek.

“Shut up!”

“Don’t tell her I said that. She will beat me into a pulp. She loves hitting me.”

“That she does. Oh, I see her, talk to you at home. Bye. Love you.”

“Love you too.”

Neha frantically waved to get Meera’s attention, but she was busy talking with a smart-looking middle-aged woman. Both women were beautiful, but their appearance was the stark opposite. Meera was an average-height, curvy woman with straight black hair and chestnut brown eyes. Even the

ugly dresses looked beautiful on her hourglass figure. Whereas the woman she was talking to was almost 6 feet tall, slim, lanky, sharply dressed and her bushy hair was complimenting her diamond-shaped face beautifully. They both talked to each other for a few minutes, smiled, shook their hand, and said goodbye.

Meera scanned the crowd near the arrival gate of the huge airport and spotted a beautiful, tall, very slim girl dressed in a yellow summer dress. She was looking like a beautiful sunflower. Meera ran towards her, dragging a heavy suitcase behind her, trying to avoid the hustle and bustle of the airport.

They hugged each other tightly. Neither of them was ready to let the other one go, so they kept hugging for a long time. Tears of happiness were racing from their eyes.

“Hi, Di! It’s so good to see you,” said Neha while in a big bear hug.

“Oh! I missed you so much. Where is Vivek?” replied Meera, hugging Neha tighter.

“Vivek is waiting for you at home. He is making a special meal for you.”

“Great. I’m famished.”

Meeting a close friend after so many years was heart-wrenching for them. No matter how much they tried, they just couldn’t loosen their grip.

“You know, we need to stop hugging and start moving, else Vivek will have to come and end our hugging competition,” said Meera still refusing to let Neha go.

“I know but I just can’t let go. I missed you so much. And you smell like nostalgia.”

“Missing India?”

“I miss all of you.”

Meera placed her hand inside Neha’s hair and caressed it with love. After a few more minutes of hugging and crying, they broke the embrace.

“This is for you.” Neha handed her the bouquet. It had white Calla lilies and white Tulips, her favourite flowers, in a beautiful arrangement.

“Aww... thank you.” She kissed Neha on her cheeks, and they moved towards the exit.

“When is your team arriving?”

“After I assess if this is the right partnership for me and my NGO.”

“Guild Corporation is the best and Daniel Westside is amazing at his job.”

“Yeah, you will say that as it is your company. And if this Mr Westside is so amazing at his job, why does he need the help of an NGO to improve his social responsibility.”

“He does not want you to improve, he wants your help to restart, he wants someone to give him ideas to help more people.”

“Yeah, right.”

While talking they exited the airport. The summer sun greeted Meera by shining on her face. She looked up and soaked in the sun, took a deep

breath in and the smell of sweet flowers in her hands mixed with vehicle smoke and hot asphalt hit her nose.

Neha opened her phone and ordered a cab from an app. The display showed two minutes waiting time.

“Di, you know no one in NY except Oliver and us, right?” Asked Neha curiously.

“Why? Do you want me to stay with them and not you? And don’t even mention that idiot. Some hotshot actress was more important to him than his best friend.”

“What? No, stop teasing. It was you who said no to staying with us. You said yes after so much pestering. And you know how important Oliver’s job is for him.”

“Yes, more important than his best friend and I didn’t want to impose on you guys that’s why I said no to staying with you. I still think I should stay in a hotel, that will be better for everyone.”

“I used to spend my days and nights in your room disturbing your peace during our hostel days, now it’s your time. Please take advantage of us for as long as you want.” Neha placed her head on Meera’s shoulder lovingly and spoke.

“Stupid girl!” said Meera lovingly. “But why did you ask?”

“Oh, nothing. I was just curious as to who was that woman you were talking to. You both looked as if you guys were old friends.”

“Jealous?” teased Meera.

“Di!” exclaimed Neha.

“Her name is Abena, she was my seat neighbour on the plane. We talked nonstop during the whole journey, and we had a blast.”

“Only you can make a friend in a day.” There was a hint of pride in Neha’s voice.

“What can I say, I am just so attractive?” They giggled like two little girls. The joy, happiness, and excitement were oozing from every single pore of their body. The twinkle in their eyes was from glee or due to sunshine, no one could tell.

The taxi arrived and Meera was ready to begin a new journey. The whole way they kept reminiscing about how fun their time was during their college days. The two years she spent with Meera during their engineering was exciting and amusing and fun-filled. Neha used to spend more time in Meera’s room than her own room.

They had no idea they were approaching Neha’s locality as they were immersed

in laughing and talking and recalling and living in their fond memories. Meera suddenly noticed the well-planned beautiful society filled with high rising apartments.

“Wow! This place is beautiful,” exclaimed Meera.

“Yeah, this part of town is known as Guild City, named after my Boss’s ancestors. It’s like a small city inside a city.”

“City inside a city?” asked Meera, confused.

“Yes, we have five different localities inside Guild city. Aura Environs, Alice Vicinity, Arthur Turf, Ormond locality and Virtue Suburb. See that tallest building closest to the river?” explained Neha.

“Yes.”

“That is in Arthur Turf, that’s where my boss lives. And that grey building is in Aura Environs, that’s where I live.”

“Nice. Your boss’s name is Arthur, and he lives in Arthur Turf. Narcissistic much?” taunted Meera.

“No, just a little.” They both started laughing hard. Neha continued, “not only Arthur Turf but every locality is named after members of Guild family. Ormond Guild was the big boss, but he died a few years back due to cancer. Aura Guild is my boss’s mother. Alice Vicinity was known as Dream Vicinity but after her death, it was renamed to honour her. She was my boss’s fiancé. And Virtue is just virtue, no relation to Guild family.”

“So many deaths in a single family,” said Meera in a sad voice.

“Yes, my poor boss. Now, back to your tour of localities. You know every neighbourhood is a planned community with a gym, a spa, a swimming pool, a clubhouse, a business centre, a fitness centre, coffee shops, a party hall, movie theatre, restaurant, and lounges, convenience shops, grocery stores, medical shops. You name an amenity; every residential area has one. We also have a hospital, a school inside Guild city. The best part is we have an equality centre where people from different religions go to worship. We have rooms designated for individual religions under the same roof.” Neha finished her exposition with glory and delight.

“Wow, it’s like a mini country.” Meera sounded impressed.

“And my boss is the king of the city,” boasted Neha.

“Right the narcissistic and arrogant man you could not shut up about over the phone,” said Meera, annoyed.

“Yeah, the same man you will work with if you say yes to Mr Westside. This will be beneficial for your NGO too. A new branch with the help of Guild Corporation will put Spriha on the map. You will be able to fulfil your dream to help people all around the world.”

“Stop selling your boss and his CSR team. I am here, aren't I?”

“I can't, no one can. He is not only brilliant; he is the most handsome man you would ever see but completely formal and wooden. He rarely smiles and when he enters the office it feels like a dictator is entering his army camp, but we all know he has a soft heart. That's why he tries to give back to the community whenever and however he can. But after he lost Alice, the love of his life, a year back he stopped everything which spoiled our public image and diminished our brand value. We really need you to help us in our CSR programmes.”

“Hey, calm down! I promised you I will help, and I am here because of you, not because of Mr Westside or your boss, because of you. So, you need to stop being afraid of your boss. I will handle him.” She side-hugged Neha lovingly and assured her.

“It's easy for you to say. He has become worse after Alice's death; he has turned into a complete devil.”

“He is just a human being and after losing someone you love anyone will lose their mind, nothing new in that.”

“Tell that to everyone working in GC. Every single person is afraid of him except Mr Ryan Brown.”

“Oh, name drop! Who is this new person? Tell me more.”

“There’s nothing much to tell. He is the corporate secretary, my boss’s right hand. He keeps to himself most of the time but is polite, kind, and yes, very handsome. Why do you want to know? Finally decided to get married.”

“Who? Me? Please!!!”

Meera detested marriage. Every time anyone talked about marriage, she would walk out of that conversation immediately. She was always an independent girl, and her freedom was the most important thing for her.

The car slowed down and stopped at the gate of Aura Environs. Neha flashed her ID card, and the security guard opened the gate for the cab to enter. The whole locality was surrounded by beautiful green trees. Red Maple Trees, Silver Maple Trees, Norway Maple Trees were planted all around to blanket the Environs with greenery. Small gardens were scattered with beautiful, vibrant, delightful flowers. The cab halted under the grey building where Vivek was standing at the curb with the cutest smile on his face to welcome them.

Meera got out of the cab and ran towards Vivek and hugged him.

“Welcome Di! I missed you. How are you? How was your flight? How is everyone in India?” Vivek hugged her tightly and kept swaying her side to side affectionately and bombarded her with questions.

“Thank you. I missed you too. I am fine. The flight was very tiring but looking forward to a delicious meal. And everyone is fantastic in India because you are in the US.” Meera answered chronologically to tease him.



“Di!” He exclaimed and pushed her away slightly just to show that he was hurt due to her tease but pulled her instantly to hug again. “And yes, the meal I prepared is delicious because I prepared it, Hungry?”

“Yes.” Meera could not control her laughter and she burst out laughing.

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Wiping her tears, Meera smiled after remembering her first day in NY. The warm welcome she received from Neha and Vivek reduced her fear slightly. She stood up and placed her ears on the door, there was complete silence. She was just an NGO owner and the kidnapper told her they had no interest in money, then what was their motive behind keeping her captive. She racked and racked her brain but was unable to think why someone would be interested in her.