

Cricket 44

Chapter 44

Currently, our team was staying at one of the Hilton hotels, a luxurious arrangement made by the BCCI to ensure we had a comfortable stay in England ahead of the matches. Our first match was in just four days, and while our regular practice sessions were still scheduled, the coaching staff had decided to give us a normal training to avoid overexertion. The reasoning was simple: no one wanted any injuries that might deprive the team of a key player just before the match.

The rooms had been allocated, two players per room, for a time I think about getting a personal room for me from my own money, but I decided against it. I felt it would be better to stay together with the others and bond as a team and have enjoyment. So, we arranged for a big suite with two bedrooms. I ended up sharing it with Arshdeep, Yashasvi, and Abhishek.

As we entered the suite, Yashasvi's reaction was priceless. His eyes widened with amazement as he took in the sheer luxury of the space. Being from a humble background, he hadn't experienced anything like this before. The plush interiors, the high-tech gadgets, and even the fancy bathroom fittings seemed to intrigue him.

"Yash, it's just a hotel room, not a palace," Abhishek teased him with a grin.

"Hey brother, have you seen these switches? What do they do?" Yashasvi asked, fiddling with a panel by the wall. They were blue colour touch Buttons

I chuckled, walking over to explain. "That controls the lights, the AC, and even the curtains. See this button here?" I pressed it, and the curtains automatically drew open, revealing a stunning view of the city.

"Whoa!" Yashasvi exclaimed, clearly impressed.

Abhishek smirked. "Wait till you see the bathroom. There's a sauna in there."

"What's a sauna?" Yashasvi asked, looking genuinely curious.

"It's like sitting in a steam room, great for relaxing your muscles after a long day," Arshdeep explained.

"You'll get used to it, Yash," I added, patting his shoulder.

After we settled in and explored the suite, I decided it was time for a snack. Picking up the room service phone, I asked the guys what they wanted to eat.

"Abhishek, what about you?"

He didn't even think twice. "Vegetable Roll with Pita Bread," he said confidently.

"Arshdeep?" I asked.

"Hmm... do they have Chole Bhature? I want to try the English version," he said with a thoughtful look.

I stared at him, trying not to laugh. He scratched the back of his head awkwardly. "Okay, okay, how about Paneer Tikka?"

I nodded and placed his order. Turning to Yashasvi, I asked, "And you?"

"Anything good, bhai," he replied, shrugging.

Sighing, I decided on Grilled Veggie Sandwiches for him, while I chose Hummus with Pita Bread and Veggies for myself. To top it off, I ordered four cups of Masala Tea. The hotel staff assured me the order would be ready in ten minutes.

When the food arrived, we all dug in, enjoying the snacks. Yashasvi, in particular, seemed fascinated by the taste of the tea, which reminded him of home. Just as we were starting to eat, there was a knock on the door.

I opened it to find Gill and Ravi Bishnoi standing there, grinning.

"Looks like a party's going on here," Gill said as he walked in.

"We smelled the food," Ravi added, making himself comfortable.

They joined us, and the snacks disappeared in no time. After relaxing for a while, I suggested we head out and explore the city. Everyone agreed, and I gave them 15 minutes to get ready and meet in the lobby.

As expected, everyone showed up on time except for Gill. Five minutes later, he arrived, looking sheepish. "I got lost," he admitted, scratching his head.

We burst out laughing. "Classic Gill," Abhishek said, shaking his head.

Since our match was in Leeds, we decided to explore the city center. We found electric kick scooters parked by the roadside, scanned them with our phones, and took off. Following Google Maps, we navigated the streets, enjoying the cool breeze and the sights.

The city center was lively, with bustling streets, historic buildings, and vibrant shops. We took countless photos, both solo and in groups, capturing memories we'd cherish forever. After some time, hunger struck again, and we found a famous pizza place.

"Best pizza in town, they say," Arshdeep read from the reviews.

"They better not be lying," Abhishek said as we walked in.

The pizza didn't disappoint. It was delicious, with gooey cheese and a perfect crust. Anyone who was initially hesitant to try cheesy Pizza, couldn't stop eating after tasting it.

"England ka pizza zindabad!" Arshdeep declared, making everyone laugh.

After our meal, we rode back to the hotel on the scooters, laughing and chatting the whole way. Once we got back to our suite, we planned to sleep early, but with so many of boys in one place, that idea went out the window.

We pulled out the PS4 from our rooms cupboard and started playing games, cheering and jeering as the matches got competitive. When we got tired of that, we switched to playing Ludo on our phones, and when that got boring, we just talked.

"Anyone here with a girlfriend?" Abhishek asked suddenly, raising his eyebrows suggestively.

The room erupted in laughter and teasing as everyone shared their stories—or lack thereof.

By 2 a.m., exhaustion finally caught up with us. We all crashed in the same room, some on the beds, others on the sofas. Abhishek, being Abhishek, decided to try sleeping in the bathtub with warm water.

"This is heaven," he declared, only to come running out thirty minutes later, shivering from the cold.

With no space left, he ended up sleeping on the mat, muttering about how unfair life was.

The night was chaotic but fun, filled with laughter and bonding. Moments like these reminded me of why I loved being part of a team. As I drifted off to sleep, I couldn't help but feel excited for the days ahead.