

Cupid with the gun

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“Naman.. Please pass me on a glass of water and any painkiller, am not even able to open my oculus because of severe headache.” She murmured the sentence for three four times in half asleep but no response came. She kept on flinching with pain for some minutes and then finally managed to open her eyes.

“Ohh.. my gosh.. where the hell I am? Different fan, roof, curtains and wall design too.. this is not my bedroom” she said to herself, turned the face towards her partner on the bed and rug swept out from under her feet. She was sandbagged to see Rachit, Naman’s boss and her batch mate during graduation days lying next to her and smiling.

She wanted to leave that bed immediately but had no cloths over her body. Mere thought of what has happened with her last night shocked her to death and she clenched her eyes out of fear for some thirty seconds. “I’m sorry Asmi..” and she took her hand out from the blanket and slapped him tight before he could have even completed his sentence and then burst into tears. He stayed calm while she was sitting tearful and silence reigned for some ten minutes. He then left the bed first, wrapped himself in a towel, walked towards the wardrobe, took her cloths out and threw on the bed next to her, walked out of the room and let the door thud shut.

Asmita also managed the courage to leave the bed and put on the cloths. Tears were still rolling over her cheeks and her brain was almost non functional. When she opened the door to walk out, she found Rachit standing just outside waiting for her. “Sorry Asmi..” “am Asmita not your Asmi and do stay away.” She screamed even before he could have completed and walked out of the flat in a flash. Rachit kept on gazing at her from behind.

Whatever has happened last night was too traumatic for her to handle and she was somehow managing to walk through the streets of Hyderabad back to her place. Her place was on some fifteen minutes of walking distance from the place

where Rachit was residing. She simultaneously was also trying to recall what the last thing she remembered from yester night was?

It was an office party at Rachit's place and many of his colleagues and peers were present there with their families. Naman was also there in the party with Asmita, his wife. Last thing which Asmita remembered was, Rachit being completely drunk was trying to be physical with her and she went to Naman and told the entire script. Naman, then suggested her to stay normal by saying "Rachit Sir might be out of senses because of drink, you just stay calm and we are leaving this place in next 10-15 minutes." He, then offered her a glass of soft drink and requested to finish that off before leaving the place. She took some five minutes to finish that off and that stayed the last thing in her memory box from that night.

Rachit was the batch mate of Asmita during her MBA days and also proposed her twice or thrice to which she disapproved bluntly. They have never been even in friendly terms that time.

Why Naman offered his wife to the boss for one night stand stayed the biggest question but she was too distressed to think on this point. She just wanted to walk as fast as possible so that she can reach at her place with in no time. It took ten minutes for her to reach the place and she knocked the door. Naman walked in and opened it with the grave looks. Not even a single sign of guilt was there at his face. "You cheat" she screamed, pushed him back and walked inside her room. She then locked the room from inside and fallen on bed like an axed tree.

It took some thirty minutes for her to get back to her senses. In the meantime tears have also dried up. Too many vital important questions were grueling her and she was not having answer to any. She then walked down the memory lane by some sixteen months from where everything started.

It was a chocolate cream love story for Asmita which blossomed in Allahabad, city of Mahakumbh and education hub of North India. Asmita, the only child of her parents was pursuing her MBA from Allahabad Central University. Her mother died when she was just fourteen and all the responsibilities of the family fallen

over her shoulders at the very tender age but she always lived up to the expectations. Mother is always the best friend, philosopher, guide and biggest moral support for any girl and father most of the times is not able to take that place. Being deprived of that love and care, she tried to find that thing outside in this materialistic world and Naman came to her life.

Naman was an engineering graduate from Galgotia Institute of Technology, Noida and was appointed as faculty on contractual basis at IERT-Allahabad, a reputed institute for engineering and technology and a state government sponsored one. Some senior faculty from the very same institute requested Asmita's father to provide some place of accommodation to him and by this way he walked in as a tenant to her house.

Though Naman was some five years elder to her but she felt something special for him when he walked in for the first time. Height 5'11", fair complexion, athletic body and intellectual looks perhaps because of those frameless specs. She always fantasized about a guy like that only as her soul-mate and he walked in her real life. She had a secret crush over him from the first day itself and was always finding reasons to talk to him or even stare at him.

Naman, a perfect Delhiite, roadside romeo and a Casanova realized the entire thing on the very third day and a perfect plan just egressed in his crooked mind.

It all started like an ordinary love story. Asmita being a desperate partner was always keen to talk to him and she tried to find numerous ways of getting closer to him to which he also responded. Everything was going perfectly fine between them and then came the Valentine's Day. He proposed her knowingly that it will not be rejected and same thing happened too. He responded to the acceptance by kissing her for the first time and then it all went till the extent of physical intimacies.

One fine evening after Holi, Asmita told her father about the relationship and her desire to get married to Naman. Listening to this her father was shocked to death. Her father was a man of repute in society and wanted to marry her only daughter

in same caste and with the family of equal social status. Asmita's father had very good relations with Rachit and his family and always wanted Asmita to marry him. He was aware of the fact that Asmita is having very formal relations with Rachit but never knew that Asmita has already rejected his proposal twice or thrice. Father had some big plans for her marriage but the daughter had some different plans altogether. She clearly communicated that she will marry Naman only and no other name will come in her life. Father had no other choice then to respect the decision and he adjoined with the family of Naman to put up the proposal.

With in no time everything was materialized between both the families and dates were fixed for engagement and marriage.

Every tale has a twist and this script was none of the exceptions. Naman was a chain smoker and an opium addict. She was aware of him being a chain smoker and took it very lightly but wasn't aware of the other fact.

Everything went according to the plans for some time and they got engaged in July the very same year. Now it was high time for the unanticipated twist to occur as Asmita's father was diagnosed with cancer a few weeks after engagement. The problem was at its last stage and he was immediately shifted to Tata Institute of Cancer Research, Mumbai for the treatment. All the hard earned money which was kept for Asmita's marriage was diverted as the treatment expenses of her father. Even his owned house in Allahabad was sold out in order to manage the heavy expenses on the treatment but no signs of melioration were witnessed in her health.

In the meantime Asmita also completed her MBA but was not able to fetch any job in campus placement because of her obvious personal problems. Rachit got a lucrative offer in a Hyderabad based MNC and moved over there. The stable but critical health of Asmita's father made him prepone the marriage dates and the ceremony took place some months prior to the due date.

One the very first night after marriage Naman clearly told her side about this relationship to Asmita. He very bluntly told her that he was never interested in her

and did the entire thing because of money and that already sold off bungalow. He brusquely communicated that he said yes to this marriage because of society and family pressure because cancer was diagnosed after their engagement and if this would have been diagnosed earlier, he would have never said yes to this relationship. Naman very clearly told that this is not at all a love story and he was feeling like being trapped but he never had option to walk out. Listening to this, Asmita burst into tears but it was far too late for any of them to react now so they both stayed calm.

Some four-five days later Naman communicated Asmita to find a job in Allahabad as he being on contractual job was not able to afford the expenses. He was supposed to leave that already sold house as well and Asmita's father also decided to move back to his village for his last few days. Searching for a reputed job in the mediocre city like Allahabad is always a gigantic task so Asmita made a call to Rachit for the first time to help her out.

He made a call to Rachit and told the entire script on the day one itself. Rachit gave his ears to everything and tried to listen the saga in a very composed manner. After heeding to everything Rachit realized that there is no love story from the side of Naman and this relationship is not as strong as it looks from outside. Naman was an opium addict too and Asmita never liked that. He presented a different solution altogether to the problem. He told her that it's difficult for him to manage a job for her in Allahabad but rather easy to offer a job to Naman on suitable technical profile under his belt. They both can move to Hyderabad and he will offer Naman a good package too plus Hyderabad being the city of opportunities Asmita will also very well find a job for herself in a month or two.

Asmita discussed the offer with Naman that evening only over dinner and he accepted the offer by saying "am happy that my good for nothing lady has at least did something for me". Taunts like this were the normal course of action for her so she ignored it and they started planning to relocate to Hyderabad.

Within next ten days they both moved to Hyderabad, which remained the biggest mistake of Asmita's life. Naman joined as the sub-ordinate to Rachit in the very

same office and things started taking a sharp turn. Rachit, who was rejected for marriage by Asmita some one year back started finding any many ways to visit her place now. He started calling her late nights and tried to keep Naman busy in office during nights. He also started flirting with her on the public platforms where they meet or office get-togethers too. Within no time the entire office came to know about the recommendation Asmita made for Naman and started gossiping about Rachit and Asmita. Asmita tried to avoid the situation but was not able to do so whereas Naman was indifferent to the entire saga. He was less than least bothered about Asmita and was busy consuming opium, cigarettes and flirting with other girls of the office.

She always knew that there is nothing like love in the mind of Naman for her now and she is just a sex slave in the house. She always considered this to be her destiny but never stopped loving and caring him. But this was the height of torture and she even in worst of her nightmares never expected this from Naman. He gave her some sleeping pills in soft drink and handed over to Rachit for one night stand. Disgusting is a small word for him, he said to herself being back to present and burst into tears. She kept on lying distressed on the bed and crying for couple of hours more.

It was 1:00 in the afternoon and she heard a knock at the door but was hardly bothered. Door was knocked twice or thrice but she never responded as she anticipated Naman to be on the door. She then heard a familiar voice from outside and was left stunned. "Open the door Asmita, Its Rachit" came the nouse and her mind went blank. Millions of questions floated through her mind in flash and then she finally decided to open the door.

She left the bed, swept her tears, adjusted her saari then walked towards to door and opened it. Rachit was present there along with Naman, Rachit walked inside and Naman accompanied him. Rachit walked towards the only chair available in the room and adjusted himself on that while Naman and Asmita kept on standing.

"Am not here to apologize to anyone, why anyone? Rather to Asmita only as I and Naman made a fair deal on this point." Asmita looked at Naman with disgust while

his face was still graced on the floor. "Naman has done a fraud worth 3 lakhs and everything is on records, I can send him to jail with in next thirty minutes and everything will be ruined. He will never get a job anywhere and some packets of opium were also found in her locker and if this case is also reported to police, I think... seven years.." and Rachit took a long pause.

"Naman has offered you to me for yester night to save himself and that was a deal between us..." and she burst into tears even before he could have completed. "I do believe in fair deals and am making one more offer in front of you people. Naman knows that I loved you since my college days and still have the same feeling. You have hurt my ego and self respect by rejecting me thrice plus you have slapped me too today morning, and now it's the revenge time for me now. I have two offers for you, first is you leave Naman and get married to me, will take you away like my princess and forget everything from the past. I will surely send Naman to jail just to ensure that all the gates for him to walk back in to your life are closed. Second option is, I will offer you the job of my secretary and you better know for what reasons, you have to accompany me for all my trips to India and abroad plus have to be at my place for every weekend. I will have full possession over you for all days and nights and can anytime call you to the place I want. I will leave Naman and will not make any complaint against him. His job will also be secure in this case and he can continue with his work from tomorrow. He will continue to be your husband, only legally though. Do tell me your choice by tomorrow morning for sure." He closed the discussion with the smile and then walked towards Asmita, hold her tight in his arms and planted a passionate kiss on her lips. Asmita being too stunned to react kept on standing like a mannequin and Naman never had the guts to react. He then walked out of the room and Naman walked behind him.

Asmita, being completely stunned kept on standing for a couple of minutes and then again walked towards to door and locked that from inside. It was pointless talking to Naman on this point and she decided to take the decision on her own. She was completely back in her senses now and was standing in front of a mirror all set to take the most important decision.

Marrying to Rachit was the option he ruled out in a flash. Now she had two options, either to be his sex slave for Rachit also save her husband or to commit suicide. She always knew that committing suicide is not going to save Naman by any means. Being the secretary of Rachit will only bring the insult of high gravity for her in the society. Rachit's colleagues and peers still talk rubbish about her and how will she manage to work in the same office remained a concern for her. How good it is to sacrifice herself this way for a guy like Naman also remained a gigantic question for her. Standing in front of mirror, she was talking to herself now. "I loved Rachit that is his destiny and he never loved back, that was mine. We got married and I still love him. I know that he is having some serious health issues too which he is not disclosing to any of us. If I die, he will suffer and I will be the reason. I could have easily committed suicide if I was sure that he will be happy after that. But I know that my death will leave him in lurch and he is too weak to face the world alone. After whatever has happened last night between me and Rachit, nothing is left for me in my life as a lady. The only thing I know today is that I loved him and will do everything to save him now. This way I can at least be with him to take care of his deteriorating health. I will do everything for Naman and that stays final." She took the decision and walked to Rachit's office and communicated him the same.

It was mighty unbelievable for Rachit that Asmita has taken this call but anyways he accepted it. He offered her the job of his secretary for formality and continued with the plans he made with her. She started accompanying him on all his trips and spending weekends with him just for the sake of his love. Entire office was gossiping over this matter but Naman being the part of that office was totally indifferent. Asmita made the compromise of her lifetime for her love which any other lady shouldn't have even thought off. She raised the bar of sacrificing in love by at least six inches.

But yes, the communication between Naman and Asmita almost stopped even at home. They hardly talk to one another as Naman never had the guts to face her and Asmita had her reasons of not talking to him. But yes, she was never careless about his health and always tried to give him medicines on proper time.

This scene continued as it is for almost an year and suddenly one day Naman got severely ill and was hospitalized. When Asmita rushed to the doctor, she was total that Naman has lost his both the kidneys because of excessive consumption to opium and liquor. His kidney is needed to be transplanted and it was cost some 15 Lakh rupees and at least one kidney of medically fit person to save his life.

She then walked to Rachit and told the entire tale. He told Rachit that she will donate her kidney and will always work for free if he gives her 15 Lakh rupees in one go to save Naman's life. Rachit was amazed to see the amount of love Asmita still had and accepted the offer.

It took almost 45 days for Naman to recover. Those were the 45 days of realization for him in which he has seen everything. His heart melt and guilt factor took over him. The moment he was able to sit properly, he was on his knees in front of her to apologize. The outburst of tears from both sides made the environment wet. Words were needless that time as she made him stand and hugged like never before. She has forgiven him for all her pains and tears. What a lady she was.

Next Morning when Rachit visited to see him, Naman clearly stated that Asmita will not go to his place from now onwards. He will work hard and harder and return all his money as soon as possible and then they will leave this city for always. Rachit, who was already moved by Asmita's sentiments for Naman apologized from both and said "I don't need any money; you can leave for any where you want."

And finally they left for Mumbai, the city of dreams and hopes to start their new life.