

Index

Chapter 1	1
Chapter 2	4
Chapter 3	8
Chapter 4	13
Chapter 5	17
Chapter 6	20



Author - Alok Mahapatra
Instagram - @alokmahapatra007
Twitter - @aloktwts

Song credit on page 15 goes to Anuv Jain

Dedicated to my family

Chapter 1

My name is Aryan, and I'm 16 years old. Recently, I appeared for my 10th-grade board exams, and now I'm going on a summer vacation with my family to my hometown in Uttarakhand.

To give you some background, I have been living in Mumbai with my family since childhood. We are a family of four, including myself, my sister Ananya, and our parents. We belong to a middle-class family where I didn't have access to my preferred toys during my childhood, and as I grew up, I lost interest in playing with them altogether.

I have a calm temperament, and my academic performance is average. I can manage to score 70+ in exams without much difficulty. In terms of appearance, I have a dusky complexion and slightly messy hair that always seems to be unruly.

Today is April 13, 2019, and my family and I are waiting at the station for the train to arrive.

"Son, see where the train has reached," Papa said.

"Yes, Papa, let me check," I replied,

taking out my phone from my pocket to check the train's status.

"Yes, Papa, the train is currently at Jogeshwari station," I informed him (which is one station behind).

"Alright, so it will take another 10 minutes," he said.

"Yes, Papa," I confirmed.

Gradually, more people started gathering at the station. Mothers were urging their children to get up from the luggage they were sitting on, saying, "*Chala uthuya trena yeta aahe*," which means "Get up, the train is about to arrive." The station made announcements first in Marathi, then in Hindi, and finally in English.

"Passengers, please pay attention. Train number 2-2-9-1-7, Haridwar Express, will be arriving shortly on Platform 2," the announcement echoed. The train was just one minute away from arriving.

Everyone held onto their belongings and tightly gripped their children as if they were holding weapons, as if a battle was about to commence. At that moment, a distant voice started to emerge, gradually growing louder as if it would engulf us in its own melody. And just like that, the train appeared before our eyes. The people who had gone too far ahead on the platform to catch a glimpse of the train's speed had to step back a little.

As the train approached, it made a loud noise and then slowly came to a stop. As soon as it halted, everyone started boarding the train.

Our family boarded the train as well. Papa had a backpack and a wheel bag in his hand, while holding a handbag in the other hand. I also held a backpack and a wheel bag behind me. Mummy had a handbag in one hand, containing food and drinks, and she held Ananya's hand with the other.

"Let's see which seats we have," Papa said.

"Sure, let me tell you... 23, 24, 27, 28," I replied.

Papa repeated the seat numbers in his mind, scanning each seat with his eyes. Finally, he found a seat that matched the numbers he had memorized. It was a lower, middle, upper, and side upper berth. I opted for the window seat and settled down near the window.

"Mummy, I want to sit on the window seat," Ananya said.

"Aryan, haven't you grown up yet? Let your sister sit" Mummy remarked. I got up from my seat and moved to the adjacent window seat where no passenger had arrived yet.

Papa placed all the belongings inside the seat, locked it, and sat down, taking a deep breath as if he had accomplished everything in life.

At that moment, an elderly uncle came and sat on the side lower seat. He didn't have much luggage, just a large handbag that he placed on the seat as soon as he arrived. He then wiped his sweat off.

"Son, can you turn on the fan?" the elderly uncle asked. As soon as I heard this, I was about to press the button, but Ananya pressed it before and gave me a lovely smile.

I looked at her with a strange expression, put my hand into my pocket, and took out my phone.

"Where are you headed, uncle?" Papa asked the elderly man.

"I'm going to Gangapur in Rajasthan, and you?" the elderly uncle replied. We were heading to Roorkee," I replied.

"Oh, Uttarakhand, the land of gods," the elderly uncle responded.

"Are you alone, or is someone accompanying you?" Papa asked curiously.

"No, I'm alone... staying in Mumbai," He said.

"Oh, I see."

Chapter 2

Just then, there was a sudden jolt from behind, and the train started moving from its place. Although I had turned 16, there was still a childlike excitement within me. As the train moved, I would hold onto the iron bars outside the window and pull them with all my might, as if I was the one pulling the train forward. "Look, Ananya, I'm pulling the train!" I exclaimed. "I'm pulling it too!" Ananya joined in.

The train gradually picked up speed. it felt as if the train was slipping on butter, with the slippery sensation increasing.

Slowly, we passed by station nameplates with "Borivali" written on blue boards, shops selling chips and cold drinks, the worker pushing a trolley loaded with goods, and people waiting for the next train.

A strange feeling crept over me, as if I was distancing myself from someone, even though I was only going away for a month. I felt a strong desire to sit on the same seat where my family had patiently waited for the train.

Gradually, the last person at the station disappeared from sight, and the station's yellow wall reminded me, "Look, this is my name, Borivali. Don't forget me."

As I continued to watch, the bustling cityscape gradually transformed into a sparser area with workers repairing the tracks. The bustling sounds of workers fixing the tracks replaced the earlier commotion. The city buildings gradually decreased in number, and the railway tracks went from 12 to 8, 8 to 4, and finally dwindled down to just 2. It reminded me how, as we grow older, we realize who holds the most significance in our lives.

The increasing number of trees signaled the transition from gardens to dense forests. I shifted my gaze away from the window and noticed my father comfortably lying on the side upper berth, while my mother and Ananya occupied the upper seats. Ananya was busy styling her hair with my mother's help. It was just me and the elderly uncle left in the lower berths. He was engrossed in playing Candy Crush on his phone, and I was sitting there alone.

"Aryan, give Ananya the phone. She's asking for it," my mother said. I handed her the phone with a reluctant expression. I then moved back to my window seat and sat down.

"Sev Khamman... Sev Khamman," a voice echoed through the train, accompanied by its appetizing aroma. "Mummy, mummy, Khamman!" Ananya called out to my mother. She then relayed the message to my father, saying, "Get up, Ananya wants to have Khamman."

"How much for a plate of Khamman?" My father asked, "It's 15 rupees per plate," he replied. "Aryan, will you have some too?" Ananya asked. Although I wasn't particularly in the mood, I still felt tempted to indulge in some tasty food.

"Make three plates," my father said. The vendor prepared three plates of Khamman with chopped onions and black salt,

placing them on the upper side of Papa's seat. Papa lifted one plate and handed it to Mom, who was sitting next to him with Ananya. Then Mom gave me a plate downstairs. Papa took out a 50-rupee note from his pocket, paid the vendor, and received 5 rupees in return. "You should eat too," Mom said to Papa. Papa had two pieces and drank water before lying down.

Meanwhile, I was placing one onion on top of a piece of the Khamman and eating them together. However, there weren't as many onion pieces as there were pieces of Khamman, so I had to eat some of the pieces without onions.

Now, I have a good habit of never littering, so I took the newspaper piece and headed towards the end of the coach, where the dustbin was located. "The train seems to be slowing down... maybe we're approaching a station," I checked my phone, and it showed that the train would arrive at Vapi station at 2:55. After throwing the garbage in the dustbin, I glanced outside the open door and felt the urge to do something, like putting my feet out there and sitting. While thinking about it, a childhood memory came to my mind. When I was little, if I extended my hand outside the window, my mother would say, "Look, those beggars who come on the train, who have no hands or legs... they used to extend their hands out of the window just like you did, and that's why their hands and legs got severed. If you do the same, yours will be severed too." Thinking about this, I couldn't help but laugh.

I hesitated for a while, holding onto the handle of the door and sitting outside for a few moments. I threw the newspaper into the dustbin and went to freshen up. Meanwhile, the train stopped at a station. I finished freshening up and came out after washing my face.

I noticed a girl entering from the far end, wearing a waist bag and complaining,

"Me tamane AC ma seat book karavanu kahyu pan tame sambhalyu nahi"
(I asked you to book my seat in AC, but you didn't take care of it.)

I understood a bit of Gujarati.

That girl was wearing a maroon top and black jeans.

Her perky breasts were snugly nestled in that maroon top, accentuating her figure with a captivating allure.

Everything seemed normal, but when I looked at her face. My breath seemed to quicken, and I felt an extremely strange feeling at that moment.

It was so intense that I immediately went back inside the washroom.

"Love at first sight," people often cringe at hearing this nowadays, as if it doesn't really happen. Love doesn't exist at first sight, right?

Love happens when you spend time with a person. It happens when you get to know the other person.

I completely agree with that. "Love at first sight" doesn't really exist.

But don't you think it's magical?

Despite the world having so many beautiful faces, we are captivated by that one face so much.

The colors of the world start appearing more vibrant. A smile unknowingly forms on our faces just by thinking about them.

look at my condition. My breath got taken away just by catching a glimpse. I was talking about this magical thing. We, as adults, can't feel it as intensely as children do.

Because the world teaches us to be practical, we become familiar with various names for different feelings: "Attraction," "Infatuation," "Attachment," and so on. We can even find definitions for what love actually is. Or perhaps I'm just talking nonsense and my words hold no meaning.

And It's just a "Lust at first sight".

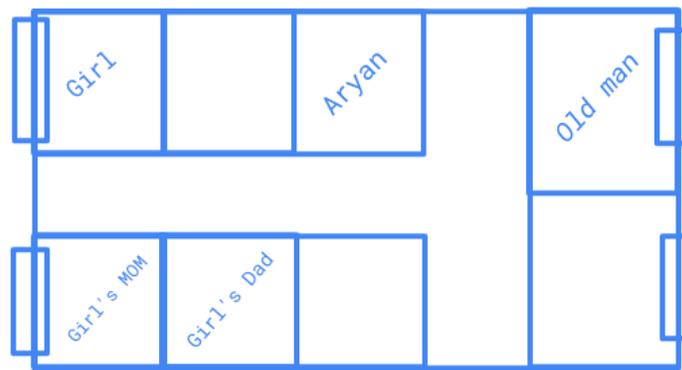
But never mind that for now. Let's go back to the story.

I step out of the washroom and make my way towards my seat, my eyes scanning left and right in search of that familiar face.

The train is now crowded with passengers. As I glance from side to side, I approach my seat, only to find that the girl's father is sitting there. My steps come to a halt as I stand frozen in place.

Chapter 3

Nevertheless, I continued towards my seat, thinking, "Why am I getting so nervous? I'll calmly go to my seat and sit down." But as I turned my gaze to the left, I saw that the girl was already seated by my window seat. At that moment, it seemed most appropriate for me to sit where I was standing, at the seat near the aisle. Sitting in my own seat felt incredibly awkward for some unknown reason, and to make matters worse, I didn't even have my phone, since Ananya was using it upstairs.



I found myself gazing out of the window beside the elderly uncle. Suddenly, I heard a voice asking, "Which seat is yours?" It was the girl's father. I, feeling flustered, responded, "Uh... yeah, these three seats on this side are ours, including the side upper berth."

"Oh, you're with your family," her father remarked.

"Yes," I replied. After that, silence enveloped the conversation.

My eyes remained fixed on the window beside the elderly uncle.

"Why is she sitting on the side? I can't even see her properly. I wish she had sat in front," I thought to myself.

I made a slight effort to repeatedly glance towards the right, where the girl was, then shifted my gaze towards the fan above, and finally down to the girl's parents on the left.

This repetitive movement was a result of my eagerness to catch glimpses of her. Most of the time, all I could see was her hair.

Perhaps once or twice, I may have caught a glimpse of her cheek.

"What am I doing? I feel so creepy." I thought, trying not to look in that direction for the past twenty minutes or so.

The girl's mother said,

*"Annu mamane phone karo ane kaho ke
ame train ma hari rite behi gaya che."*

*"Mara phone ma network nathi, station par avava do , tyare hun
phone karis"*

she replied.

"Annu... her name is Annu... Annu... such a sweet name, Annu," I thought, trying to catch glimpses of her in between. But now the girl's father noticed these actions, so he said to his daughter, "Annu, sit here. Let the little one sit by the window; that's his seat. Come here."

"Little one... uncle called me little one..." I thought.

The girl started getting up, and in a strange and stuttering voice, I said,
"No, no, please let her sit".

"Its ok beta"

I then went and sat in the window seat. "I felt extremely embarrassed at that time.

How could they call me 'little one'? I'm 16 years old. And I think they assumed I wanted to look out the window, so they let me sit here. It's like they see me as a little child who just wants to look outside **the window. Seriously,**"

I was feeling more embarrassed than ever before. I had never experienced such embarrassment in my life. But still, just the thought of sitting in the seat where Annu was seated was making me feel a certain way.

Suddenly, a phone fell from above with a loud thud. It was my phone, which slipped from Ananya's hands upstairs because both mother and daughter were sleeping like logs.

I was about to pick up the phone when Annu's hand accidentally touched it. She asked, "Is this your phone?" I nodded, slightly shaking my head. There was now only a phone acting as a bridge between Annu's hand and my hand. A moment later, the bridge broke, and the phone was in my hand.

"Thank God nothing happened to the phone. It just fell from the side of the cover," I said, looking at the phone. At that moment, Annu and I locked eyes. Annu smiled a little, and seeing her smile, I began to smile too. In the next moment, I took the phone and sat by the window. I was only thinking about how close my face was to Annu's face, now I had seen her entire face properly.

Her natural radiance, untouched by cosmetics,
Sparkling and full of life in her eyes,
Her cheeks, as tender as a blooming rose,
Caressed by the gentle touch of tranquility,
Her fair complexion adorned with enchanting dimples,
Soft strands of hair, dancing playfully on her face,

Her lips, like petals of a delicate flower,
Inviting a gentle touch and sweetest kisses,
Her voice, a symphony of dulcet tones,
Whispering melodies of love and tenderness,

My mind became so captivated by her face that it became difficult for me to think of anything else.

Surat station arrived at 4:15, and the hustle and bustle increased in the train.

"Vada pav... vada pav... vada pav..."

"Chai... chai... chai... garam tea..."

"Cold drinks... cold drinks..."

"Samoshe... samoshe..."

The atmosphere was filled with these voices. My father asked, "Which station is this?"

"Surat."

"Ah, we have reached Surat."

"Would you like to eat something?"

"No, Papa, I'm not hungry."

Papa got up from his seat and came and sat next to me. He stretched his legs on the remaining vacant seats. Annu's father went outside to get something while Annu's mom and Annu were still seated. Annu was talking to her mother.

"Her voice is so lovely. Does such a voice really exist? It feels so good to hear her talk. If hearing her talk is so nice, then how will it feel to listen to her sing?" I thought in my mind.

Annu's father returned from the station with three packets of flavored buttermilk. He distributed two among his wife and daughters and sat down to drink one himself. When Annu was drinking the flavored buttermilk, I couldn't help but steal glances at her. I had seen her taking a sip for just two seconds when my father caught me looking at her. Papa suddenly got up and left the train, saying, "I'll be right back." I wondered what had happened.

Setting aside my thoughts, I once again avoided looking in Annu's direction and started looking out the window. Papa brought a bottle of Maaza, thinking that I wanted to drink it. "Wake up, how much longer will you sleep? I brought Mazza, get up." Mummy and Ananya woke up one by one and came downstairs. Both of them freshened up.

Papa opened the Maaza bottle and took a sip. At that moment, Ananya and Mummy also joined in. "I'll drink too," Ananya said, taking a sip. I didn't understand why I was feeling embarrassed seeing that . It was just a bottle of Maaza. I hadn't been like this before. Maybe I had grown up this time, or maybe I had encountered a fellow traveler who made even the family's precious moments seem childish.

"You should drink too," Papa said to me . I took a sip. The train started moving with a jolt. As the train moved forward, Aryan could see someone going away in the distance. But this time, the person was not outside the train but inside it.

Chapter 4

Papa asked Annu's dad, "Where are you headed?"
As soon as i heard this, my eyes widened with curiosity,
but I pretended not to be interested in what they were discussing,

"We're going to Kota," Annu's dad replied.
Just a few seconds later, I pulled out my phone,
making it seem like I hadn't heard their conversation.
My finger tapped on the app.

I scrolled down,
Surat... Bharuch (05:07)... Vadodara (06:33)... Ratlam (10:35)...
Bhawani Mandi (12:45)... Ramganj Mandi (01:03)...
KOTA (02:05).

It was currently 04:55, which meant they would stay here for only 9 more
hours.

"So, you're going to Kota?" ,my dad said.

"Any particular reason?"

"No, just going to meet my young boy. He has been preparing for the JEE
exams in Kota for the past two years, and this time, after taking the exam,
We wants to meet him and bring him back with us."

"Oh, your son is also preparing for the JEE exams. Only science students do that, right?"

"Yes," replied Annu's dad.

"I also tried convincing my son to prepare for the JEE exams, but he insists on studying arts. He is adamant about it."

"Oh, he wants to pursue arts?"

My dad nodded.

"Well, what's wrong with the arts? It's also good. Nowadays, everyone seems to have forgotten the importance of arts and creativity."

"Really, Dad? You didn't remember all this when it was Ansh's turn. You told him to take up science," Annu suddenly said.

"People become hypocrites when it comes to their own children". Annu's Mom said. The atmosphere fell silent for 10 seconds.

My father interrupted the silence and asked, "So, what is your daughter studying?"

"She is studying arts"

"So, you allowed her to study arts? What grade is she in?", My dad asked.

"No, no. She has finished schooling. She will be going to college this year and wants to pursue a BA in English literature," replied Annu's dad.

Upon hearing this, *I* felt like a child, realizing that Annu had already completed her 12th grade. But then I thought to myself, "Just two more years. It's not that big of a gap. And love doesn't consider age." I found it amusing how my thoughts had changed, which I used to laugh at.

"She also chose arts... and now I'm choosing arts too... Yo, I found our first similarity," I thought.

I wonder what made her choose arts.

Does she also see stories in every moment of life, like me?" Many questions started to emerge in my mind, and slowly but surely, Annu's image started to imprint itself on my thoughts. Just like that. I felt a growing connection with Annu, whether I admitted it or not.

A conversation ensued between Papa and Annu's dad, and a couple of more questions were exchanged, bringing a momentary tranquility to both sides. As it was evening, everyone had gathered and sat down.

In Annu's family, all three of them were engrossed in their phones, while Papa was talking on a call, and Mom and Ananya were playing Ludo on their phones. I rested my head on my hands, placing them on the window ledge, and gazed outside.

A sudden song reached my ears,
"Nayi Nahi hain, ye baatein wahi , phir is modh par hum milein hain"
"Na jaane ab milenge hum kabhi , to ruk jao ek pal yahan pe."

I moved my head away from the window and looked ahead, realizing that it was Annu playing the song. Actually, this was my favorite song, which I listened to every night before sleeping. It was like a comforting song for me. While listening to this song, the world could disappear before my eyes, yet my smile wouldn't fade.

That's what this song meant to me that time.

Annu started softly humming the lyrics,
"Ye narm chadaron ki silvatein , tujhe abhi bula rahi hai"

Suddenly, i exclaimed,
"Na jao door inse ye kahe ye , sukoon kahan pe hai haasil,
Dil ko mere hai ye pata , ki milon ka ye faasala hai "

Then I snapped out from my dreams.

My mind was shouting, singing the lyrics with all its might, but I couldn't utter a word.

"I feel like singing along with her," I thought.
But I could only watch as Annu continued humming the song.

When Annu uttered the next line,

“To ek baar phir tu haske zara , dekh le meri in aankhon mein”

That's exactly what I'm doing, crazy girl. I've been smiling since I saw you, but from where do I gather courage to look into your eyes?"

I thought, and from somewhere, I found the courage to softly sing the next line,

"Mein kaid karloon har wo pal tera , teri ye baatein jo hai."

Suddenly, I became calm and started looking outside again. Annu was wondering, "What was that?"

Perhaps she wanted to say something to me after that, like, "You also like this song," but I behaved as if nothing had happened, looking outside through the window.

Annu didn't say anything further.

The song played in its entirety.

Vadodara station had already passed by.

It was now 7:35 PM.

"Let's go and have dinner," said papa.

On the other side, Annu's mom also said, "Let's bring our utensils."

My mom took out rotis made from wheat flour, fried rice, and potato-chickpea curry from her bag.

And on Annu's side, her mom brought rice flatbread, regular rice, yogurt curry, and mixed vegetables.

My mom offered wheat flour rotis to the Gujarati people, and in return, they offered rice. From there, mixed vegetables were brought.

Although there may not have been many conversations between the two families, there was plenty of food sharing.

Chapter 5

After finishing the meal, everyone went one by one to wash their hands. Mom and Ananya went together, and then Anu's mom went last. When I went, I saw Annu holding the handle of the door, sitting outside, with the strong wind touching her face.

She was smiling so much that words cannot describe it.

As her hair swayed in the wind, The scent of her hair intoxicated my senses.

I felt like just sitting there and watching her.

I thought, "This is a good time to talk, let me sit there and talk to her."

I washed my hands and took a step towards her,

"Should I call out to her or say hello? Should I call her by name or just say hello?"

I was confused about what to do.

"I'll say hello, Annu will say yes, then I'll ask her what she's doing here, and she'll say nothing, just sitting here, and then we can continue talking..."

I took a deep breath and let it out, then took another deep breath and said,

"Hello, Annu, what are you doing here?"

I realized that I was speaking, but no sound was coming out of my mouth. Just then, a ticket collector came from behind and shouted, "Oh, madam, get up from there and lock the door."

Upon hearing this, Annu turned back as if she had heard something. At the same time, I turned my face towards the washroom, and Annu caught a glimpse of me, but the next moment, I went inside the washroom.

I chewed on my lips inside the washroom.

And for some reason, I kept washing my face with water repeatedly.

But this time, I was not cleaning the dirt from my face. This time, I was cleaning the underconfident Aryan from my face.

Why do I look so awful? Do I really appear like this?

These questions were hovering on my mind whole time

5 minutes later, I came out from the washroom and went back to my seat.

The time was 08:45.

I reached my seat.

On one side of the seat, my father is sleeping, and on the other side, Annu's father is about to sleep, with Anu sitting beside him. Ananya is sleeping on the middle seat, and Annu's mother is sleeping on the other middle seat, with my mom sleeping on the side upper side. My father from below tells me to go and sleep on the upper seat. "But dad, I wanted to sleep in the middle," I said. "Ananya is sleeping in the middle, why don't you sleep on the upper seat?" "But I can't see the window from the upper seat," I said, pouting, and then went and sat on the upper seat.

Mom had already spread a shawl there. After sitting down, I started listening to a good playlist on Spotify. Mostly Indie. I had earphones in my ears, and my cheek was sticking to the seat. My face was turned to one side, and both my hands were stuck to the seat like the hand of a lizard, I noticed Annu, who was sitting below, scrolling through songs on Spotify for the past five minutes, sometimes old Hindi songs, sometimes indie songs, sometimes EDM, and sometimes English and finally she found something to listen to. At that moment, Annu's thumb pressed the power button on her phone. She placed the phone aside and rested her head against the window, looking outside. When Annu saw me, I was looking at her. At that instant, I quickly turned my head in the opposite direction.

I wanted to look back and see what she was doing, but I didn't have the courage to do so. I didn't turn around again. "The upper seat is empty; maybe Annu will come up and sleep there," I thought. "If she comes up, I'll know by her footsteps." I wait for that, but I don't even realize when sleep overcame me.

Chapter 6

I woke up from my sleep, feeling a strong urge to pee. So, I got up from my seat, and Annu was sleeping on the adjacent seat, facing the other way with her head turned. I could only see her back, and I wished she had turned towards me so that I could take a photo of her.

I quickly got off my seat and headed towards the washroom to empty my bladder. After relieving myself and washing my face, as soon as I stepped out, I noticed Annu standing with her hands folded near the door of the adjacent washroom. Initially, her expression was neutral, but gradually, she smiled.

I was unsure of what to do. Was this really happening? Was she truly standing in front of me, or was it just my imagination because I had been thinking about her so much? Or maybe she was genuinely there and had come to confront me about why I had been staring at her the whole time.

"Move aside, I need to go," Annu suddenly broke the silence. I immediately moved to the side, allowing her to enter.

Oh, that's why she was standing there. Silly me, I didn't realize it earlier. I was returning to my seat, and soon I heard a voice coming from the washroom,

"Stay there, don't go anywhere."
Was she asking me to stay? I wondered.

As soon as I uttered some words, she opened the washroom door and stepped outside.

"I want to talk to you," Annu said.
As she said that, she walked towards the train door and took a seat beneath the open door.

I observed her, unable to speak or understand the unfolding situation. I simply went along with wherever the circumstances were leading.

"Will you keep standing there or come and sit here?" Annu asked.
I approached her and sat down, folding my legs.

I couldn't comprehend what was happening or why she wanted to talk to me, especially at this late hour.

Because of the cool breeze coming from outside, Annu's hair swayed in the wind, and its fragrance drove me crazy.
She carefully adjusted her hair to prevent it from flying too much in the wind.

"Do you know what gives us the most pain in life?" Annu asked.
I didn't say anything for about 15 seconds. Just as I was about to open my mouth, she said, "Regret."

"And this pain of regret is going to be yours, because I will get off the train in a few hours, and the pain of not talking to me, the pain of losing me forever, will stay in your heart," she continued. "Do you want that?"

I was trying to understand what she was saying in the middle of the night, sitting in this strange place.

"Just say something, please," she urged.

I gathered my courage and said, "Hello."

"Hello?" Just hello.

"Take my hand," Annu said.

I gently held her hand, and the touch of her soft, cool skin sent shivers down my body.

"Look outside the train," Annu said.

I looked outside.

"Do you see a distant light?"

"Which one?"

"Look there, where you can see several lights. That might be a city or a town."

"Yeah, I see it."

"Watch how it gradually comes closer," she said.

The group of lights slowly approached us.

"Now look, it's moving away," she said.

"Yes," I replied.

"That view is gone forever, and how many more such views will come? You can only see them for a while, and then they will fade away because we can't stop the train, can we?"

"As we gazed at those sights, someone would board the train and have a conversation with you for a while, only to get off at their station, leaving you unable to stop them even if you wanted to."

"Similar moments come and go in our lives. To make those moments more beautiful, people accompany us, give us beautiful memories but eventually, they too depart. We cannot always stay in a particular moment with a particular person, even if we wish to stay there forever, because we are sitting in a train of time"

"So, should we avoid emotionally connecting with anyone because eventually everyone will leave, and if we emotionally connect with them, won't it cause pain when they leave?" I asked.

"The thing that gives you the most happiness in life is the same thing that can make you shed tears of blood one day," she replied. "But does that mean we should stop being happy? No!"

We should experience joy, sadness, jealousy, depression, anger, and let life unfold as it is. We should feel life as it is, not limit ourselves to just one emotion, especially happiness, as if we were eating our favorite food three times a day.

"Wait, what's the meaning behind all that you just said?" I asked.

"It means that you're too under-confident idiot. Live every moment openly, talk to me, tell me everything you want to say. When it's time for me to leave, I'll leave you too," she said.

"But if we become closer and you leave, it will hurt me more, won't it?" I said.

"Right now, talking to me feels good, doesn't it?" Annu said.

"Yes, it feels really good," I replied.

"Well, if you're experiencing happiness, then you must also be prepared to feel sadness, my dear," she said.

"If I stop talking to you and stop feeling this happiness, then I won't feel sadness either. And I think that's a better option," I said.

"Have you ever been to a hospital?" Annu asked.

"Yes, I have," I replied.

"There, you must have seen the screen next to a patient's bed, displaying lines that go up and down, indicating that the patient is alive. And if those lines go flat, you know what that means," she explained.

"Yeah, I understand," I said.

For all this time, I had been holding both of her hands, unaware of it.

"So, while I'm with you, how will you live this moment to experience the utmost happiness?" she asked.

The atmosphere became silent for 30 seconds.

"A.. Anuu.." i said,

"Hmm"

10sec passed

"*Ab bolega kuch*" she said

"Annu, I... I like you, I really like you",
My voice filled with a mix of nervousness and anticipation.
The words hung in the air, heavy with the weight of my emotions.

"One part of my brain tells me that it is mere lust.
Yet, another part argues that this is pure love, a profound and genuine connection."

"I don't know what I'm feeling right now,"

"But one thing remained clear. There is something special about you, something that made my heart skip a beat." And as I stood there, searching for the right words, She put her finger on my lips.

An unknown attraction began to arise between our bodies. Gradually, we became so close that I could feel her warm breath, and my heart was racing. My hand moved from her palm to her shoulder, and my other hand gently touched the back of her neck. Our faces tilted slightly, and a few moments later, her wet lips touched mine.

Everything froze around us. It felt as if our two bodies had merged into one soul. She held me tightly with both her hands, her sharp nails pressing into my back.

Our saliva was mingling, and it seemed as though we were two bodies but one entity.

We were so lost in each other that we didn't realize we were sitting near the train's edge. Suddenly, I lost my balance and was thrown out of the train.

My eyes opened, and I found myself lying on the ground, with intense pain coursing through my body. I was gasping for breath, and my parents and others rushed to help me.

"What happened? How did you fall from above? Are you in a lot of pain?" my father asked.

The seat beside me was empty, and I glanced at the other seats. The middle seat was vacant.

"Dad, please give me your phone," I said.

I checked the time. It was 4:12 am.

Tears started streaming down my face uncontrollably.

"Why are you crying, son? Tell me something," my father asked.

I couldn't say anything and just hugged him tightly, crying.

My father gently patted my back and said, "It's alright, son. The pain will go away."

Now, how do I tell my father that this pain is not physical but emotional, amplified by the physical pain, amplified by regret.

"Regret fills our hearts for the ones we miss, longing to express love to them, but time slips away, leaving us with unspoken words and here unspoken infatuation"

Thanks you so much for reading