



Author's POV:

A 15-year old, Diya, and Azira, were decorating the whole house. Well the occasion was Ananth and Aadil were going to come home a er 10 months. And also, it's Aadil and Nadia's wedding anniversary. Rehan and Sameer (Zaheer and Asma's sons) were helping them. Ahmed and Razia (Meera's parents), Raman and Ragini chuckled, looking at all four of them.

"Anna, who is going to pick up Papa and Mamu?" Diya asked Veeru.

"Zaheer mamu," said Veeru, who was busy studying.

"Anna, help us, na", Diya asked her brother.

"I had pre-finals, Diyu, otherwise I would have helped you guys," Veeru said, without raising his head from his book.

"Diyu, don't disturb him. If you want any help, then ask me", said Asma, coming out of the kitchen.

Diya pouted, listening to them.

"I'll call my Jun", saying that, Diyu went away from there. ☹

Azira chuckled, looking at her.

"Chachu, didn't you go to the station to pick up Dadda and Mamu?" Azira asked Zaheer, who was coming down.

"They were not answering my calls. And also they didn't even message me their train details", Zaheer said, sighing.

"They would come, right?" Azira asked, looking at him with innocent eyes.

"Both of them promised their princesses, right?" Zaheer asked, kneeling down in front of Azira.

Azira nodded her head positively.

"Did they ever break their promises?" Zaheer asked her.

Azira nodded her head negatively.

"They will definitely come, okay," Zaheer said, kissing her forehead.

Azira got busy with the preparations. But she was having mixed feelings, as if something was going to happen. She sighed and tried to divert her mind.

It was the evening, around 5:30 PM. Everyone sat in the hall, looking at the door from time to time. There was no call or message from Ananth and Aadil, Ahmed, Zaheer, and Raman even called their subordinates and colleagues, but there was no response from them either.

Azira and Diya were sitting sadly in a corner, Rehan, Sameer, and Arjun were trying to cheer them up. Avi and Veeru were preparing for their pre-finals by sitting in Veeru's room. It was exactly 5:50 PM when two ambulances stopped in front of the Murty mansion. Zaheer, Ahmed and Raman went out, only to get stumped in their places. Army officers were carrying two cins wrapped in Indian flags.

"Sorry uncle, we tried our best to save them. But we couldn't", Dheeraj (Ananth and Aadil's friend) said, looking at Ahmed and Raman. ☹

With in a few minutes, the whole atmosphere of Murty Mansion was turned into grief. Meera and Nadia were clinging to the co ins and crying silently. Diya side-hugged Arjun and was looking at nowhere in particular. Sameer and Rehan sat on either side of Azira, crying. Raman and Ahmed were consoling their respective wives. Avi stood beside Veeru, who was standing in a corner with a blank face. Asma, Vani, and Sakshi were trying to make the elderly to eat something. Zaheer, Shekar, and Rishi were looking a er the arrangements for the final rites of Ananth and Aadil.

Azira and Diya slowly made their way towards the co ins and caressed them lovingly.

"Can't we see them for the last time, uncle?" Azira and Diya asked, looking at Dheeraj hopefully.

"You won't be able to see them, bacha," Dheeraj tried to convince them. "Their bodies were badly burned due to the blast, and it took us a day to recognise their bodies."

"Still, we can't see them again, uncle," Azira said, being stubborn.

Dheeraj sighed and said, "You can see Aadil, but Ananth's body was totally damaged. He went to save a soldier who was shot. At the same time, the blast happened and..." Dheeraj couldn't continue any more. He shut his eyes remembering his best-friends.

But Azira wanted to see both of them as that was going to be the last time they could see them. Dheeraj gestured to his subordinates to open the co ins. Azira's face paled looking at her father's face. She bent down and pecked his cheek and said, "You kept your promise, Dadda." You came to meet us, as you and Mamu had promised." She couldn't speak more. She wanted to speak a lot, but the words got stuck in her throat. She gulped the huge lump and said, "I love you, daddy." She then looked at Ananth's body. She felt her stomach churning as she looked at him. His whole face was burnt, and one eye was totally damaged. "How painful must it be for me?" While Diya didn't have the guts to look at them, she hugged Zaheer tight and hid her face in his chest. Meera fainted, looking at Ananth. The condition of Nadia was no different. She was just staring at Aadil's face blankly with tears rolling down her cheeks continuously.

Veeru was standing in a corner looking at his father and Mamu's dead bodies. He cried silently remembering the moments he had spent with them. He looked at his love, his Azira who was crying silently in the arms of her little brothers. He then looked at his grandfathers who were trying to be strong for their respective wives. He looked at his mother who was looking pale. He wanted to go and look at his father, but he was not that strong. He won't be able to look at his burnt face. Whenever he used to feel low he used to look at his father's smiling face. He used to write letters to his father and Mamu. He used to share every small thing happened in their absence in those letters. He eagerly used to wait for their letters. The feeling of waiting for the letters of our loved ones was something else. For whom he has to write letters now?

"Please go and see him, Veeru. You would definitely regret later for not seeing him for the last time", Avi said, trying to convince his best-friend. "Take Diyu also"

Veeru nodded his head and slowly made his way towards his father and Mamu's corpses. He dragged Diya who was with Zaheer. Both of them hugged each other and burst out crying looking at their father and Mamu.

"Why did he leave us, Anna? He promised us that he would come back, right?" Diya asked Veeru, while crying.

Veeru hugged her tight and said, "He sacrificed his life for his mother country, Diyu. Please don't cry. You know, he hates to see us crying, right?"

"Tell him to come back, Anna. I'll be a good girl", said Diya.

Everyone had tears in their eyes looking at them.

Veeru and Zaheer did the last rites of Ananth and Aadil with a heavy heart. Diya was totally depressed a er their death. She became very silent and used to lock herself in the room for hours and used to stare at their family's photo. Zaheer felt empty on losing his elder brother and brother-in-law. He had always admired Ananth and he was the first one who knew about his sister's relationship.

Nadia had a heart stroke in her sleep one day. Her condition became weak and on the top of that she came to know that her daughter had cancer. Though Zaheer and Azira hid about her cancer from everyone, she listened to their conversation by mistake.

One day, Zaheer got a call from Azira's college principal that she had fainted. He immediately rushed to the college and admitted her in the hospital. And that's when, they came to know about Azira's cancer. He didn't understand how to reveal about this to the family. They were just coping up from the loss. And Nadia was also not doing good. And now this news was going to shatter the family more. On the top of that, she was in her final stage. There were less chances for her survival. Azira took a promise from him to hide about this matter to the family. Zaheer was reluctant, but he couldn't say no to his princess.

Veeru engrossed himself in studies. Writing was his escape from all his sadness. He learnt hacking and started his preparation to join army. But that was stopped in the middle when Diya took a promise from him. Azira and Diya also asked Ahmed and Raman to retire. And both of them took voluntary retirement, though both of them work in technical departments in army.

Meera used to keep herself busy with her work. She concentrated on expanding her chain of hotels along with Asma. But she never neglected her children in between. Sameer and Rehan used to cheer up Nadia with their antics, but nothing helped her. She passed away a er a year in her sleep due to massive heart attack. Azira was totally shattered. She started being aloof from everyone including Veeru. And a er six months of Nadia's death they came to know about her cancer. They were angry at her and Zaheer for hiding the matter but they melted soon.

Veeru was totally shattered. He lost his belief in God. He stopped praying to God and going to the temple. He even cursed him for snatching all his loved ones, but then Azira made him understand. He published his first book at the age of seventeen and dedicated to his father and uncle. And then he published his second book dedicating to his love, Azira. Azira was on cloud nine on seeing him achieving success. But a part of her heart cried, as she couldn't be there with him holding his hand for the lifetime. ☹

Diya stopped mingling with people. Somewhere that night and bubbly Diya was lost in all the chaos. But Arjun and Vidhi were her great support. Arjun used to irritate Diya to the core and always pick a fight with her to bring back the old Diya. Vidhi and she used to spend their weekends at the beach walking on the shore and eating their favorite pani-puri and chaat. She worked hard to get medical seat, as it was her father's dream to see her as a doctor. Diya topped in her medical entrance and got seat in AIIMS Delhi. Everyone was happy for her, but their happiness didn't last long as Azira passed away a er fighting the battle for two years. Veeru and Diya were the most shattered ones. One lost his love, while other lost his best friend. A er a few months of Azira's death Zaheer stopped talking to Meera. Meera tried to confront him many times, but he never gave her a chance. But he never stopped the others to meet Murty's. He talks with Veeru and Diya but not frequently. Ananth and Aadil death's definitely brought a huge change in the family.

Diya drifted into sleep on the swing unknowingly. It's around 5 o'clock when Meera entered her room with a tray containing two cups of tea and oat meal biscuits. She chuckled looking at her daughter who was sleeping cutely in the swing. She placed the tray on the table and went towards Diya, and tapped on her shoulder. Diya woke up slowly opened her eyes and looked at her mother. Both the mother-daughter duo sat on the balcony enjoying their evening tea.

"Is everything okay, Diyu?" Meera asked her daughter.

"Yes, amma. And why is everyone asking the same question?" Diya asked Meera, taking a bite of biscuit.

"You are getting lost in your world too much now a days. And you are spending more time at your work, which is not you. I know your work needs your attention, but you are not like this in the past. And mostly you are not smiling wholeheartedly", said Meera.

Diya's face paled, listening to her mother. What would she answer to her now? What if she misinterpreted? She knows that she will understand, but she is not ready to share her worries with her.

"Diyu", Meera said, placing her hand on Diya's shoulder.

"Haa, amma", Diya said, coming out of her thoughts.

Meera sighed, looking at her daughter. She knew that she wouldn't open up and tell her problems unless she wanted to do. She had seen her daughter many times, looking at the sky and talking to herself or to be precise sharing her day with her father and Azira. Diya is close to Ananth and Azira right from her childhood. Azira is elder to Diya by one year. Both of them are best-friends and they used to share every small thing. On seeing Azira on death bed Diya was badly shattered. ☹

And it took many months for Veeru to come out of the trauma. When Taara proposed to him, he was afraid. He knew, he promised Azira that he would move on. He was attracted to Taara and felt the emotions that he felt for his Azira or may be more than that. But a part of him was afraid, what if he lost her too. That's why he walked away when she proposed to him. That's when, Diya stepped in. She made him realize his love for Taara and told him confront his fears and insecurities to her.

"You know, right, your mother is always there with you", Meera said, patting her cheeks.

"I know, maa", Diya said, smiling at her mother.

Both of them sat there talking, enjoying the cool breeze and the sunset.

"When will you leave?" Meera asked her.

"Arjun told that he would pick me up. And maa, we will stay there tonight. They planned a movie night too", said Diya.

Meera nodded her head and said, Go and freshen-up. I'll pack your night wear and casuals."

Diya nodded her head and moved to freshen-up. She came out a er getting ready in a simple palazzo and kurta.

Arjun and Diya reached Ajay's house. They entered the house and saw Ajay and Prem arguing over something. Ajay's parents and Prem and Aasha's parents sat there with a bored look on their faces.

"Hello guys!" Arjun greeted everyone, while Diya passed a small smile to everyone.

"Hey!" Everyone greeted them.

"Cookie, this is Prasad uncle and Nalini aunty, Prem and Aasha's parents. And this is Valbhav uncle and Mahima aunty, Ajay's parents", Arjun introduced them to Diya.

Diya smiled looking at them and greeted them.

"And you know this du ers, right?" Arjun said, pointing at Ajay and Prem. To which both of them glared at him, while Arjun and Diya chuckled.

"By the way, why are you guys fighting?" Diya asked them.

"It's their routine. They can't live without bickering with each other even a day", Mahima said, rolling her eyes, while Ajay and Prem smiled sheepishly.

Arjun and Diya excused themselves and moved to the kitchen.

"Hello ladies!" Arjun greeted Aasha and Priya.

"Hey! When did you guys come?" Priya asked them.

"Just now", said Diya.

"Ajju, come on, help us", Aasha said, throwing an apron at him, making him groan.

Diya giggled and hopped on the kitchen counter.

"Oh! I forgot, amma made badam kheer and moong dal halwa. I forgot them in the car itself", Diya said, pouting.

"I'll tell, Kaka to bring them. You sit here", said Priya.

Four of them got engrossed in their while working. Diya was chopping veggies. Aasha and Arjun were cooking chicken biryani and mutton curry, while Priya was cooking baby corn and panner curry, and Gobi pepper.

"How is this?" Aasha asked, forwarding a spoon of mutton gravy to Diya.

"Yummy. How do you guys cook this delicious? Even I want to cook like you guys", Diya said, pouting.

"If you want to cook, then do your experiments on your soon-to-be hubby. And no one is master at the start itself. You can learn slowly", said Aasha. ☹

"Yeah! This girl learnt cooking for Ajay as he is a big foodie. She doesn't even to abcd of cooking before her marriage. In fact, she never stepped into kitchen. But see, now she cooks better than me", Priya said, pointing at Aasha.

"How did you learn?" Diya asked Aasha.

"I learnt basic recipes from my mother. A er our marriage aittaya used to help me and taught me many things. And most importantly both of us used to do experiments on Ajay and mavvaya", Aasha said, chuckling.

"My poor friend", said Arjun.

"By the way, idea is not bad, haa", Diya said, smiling mischievously at Arjun. He made a horrified face, understanding her silent threat, while Aasha and Priya giggled looking at him.

"Poor Ajju!", Aasha and Priya said, with a teasing smile, while Arjun stomped his feet on the floor like a kid.

"Diya, what's the need for you to learn cooking when your husband is a master chef?" Said Priya.

"I agree with you", said Aasha.

"But I want to cook for him", Diya said, pouting.

"You baked a cake for him on his birthday, right? And you can wake him up every morning with your delicious homemade coffee", said Aasha.

"I didn't anything. Ammu instructed me and I made it under her supervision", said Diya.

"So what, you made it, right? And you are lucky unlike both of us. Who will get the opportunity to eat food made by her hubby dear? For example, Prem is a big lazy ass. He doesn't even step into kitchen to get water bottle. So, cooking is not his cup of tea. And Ajay comes to kitchen only to romance with his lovely wife whenever is alone in the kitchen", said Priya.

"Hello! Even I'm here", said Arjun, as they were involving him in their conversation

"Attention seeker!" Diya mumbled under breath, but everyone heard her.

Priya and Aasha giggled, while Arjun made a bad face and said, heard that."

"Good then", Diya said, with a tight-lipped smile.

"By the way, what's with this sudden dinner plan?" Arjun asked Aasha.

"Wait for some more time, I'll tell a er having dinner", said Aasha.

"Okay", Arjun said, rolling his eyes.

With that, they got busy in their works.

A er having a delicious and yummy full dinner, everyone sat in the living room and were having badam kheer made by Meera. Aasha and Ajay stood and cleared their throats, gaining everyone's attention.

"What happened? I know, I'm elder to you but you don't need to respect me by standing in front of me", Prem said, dramatically.

Priya hit his head and said, Stop your drama. Is everything okay, guys?" She asked, looking at Ajay and Aasha.

"We have something important to share with you", said Ajay and looked at Aasha.

Aasha went and knelted in front of Mahima and Nalini and said, "Both of you asked me something during my last birthday, remember?"

Mahima and Nalini nodded their heads and smiled understanding her words.

"Is it true?" They asked her.

She nodded her head shyly.

"Hurray!!" Both of them shouted, making everyone look at them weirdly.

"Umm, amma and atta can you please tell us why are you jumping?" Prem asked them.

"Because you are going to be Mama soon", Nalini said, grinning.

Everyone stayed silent for a minute and were processing her words. They squealed in happiness, while Prem jumped on Ajay and kissed his cheek, making him glare at him.

"You, idiot, get o me", said Ajay, gritting his teeth.

Prem smiled sheepishly, while Arjun chuckled.

Arjun hugged his best friend and congratulated him, Congrats, buddy!"

Diya congratulated them and asked, "How many months?"

"Umm, we didn't go for the check up yet. I did pregnancy test at home as missed my periods and also feeling quite nauseous these days", said Aasha.

"And why would we go to some other doctor, when we have our family doctor?" Said Ajay.

"Okay then, both of you come to the hospital tomorrow a er your lunch", said Diya.

"You guys enjoy. We are retiring to our rooms", said Mahima.

"Arjun take Diya to your room. Change your clothes and come to the terrace", said Ajay.

Arjun and Diya nodded their heads and moved to Arjun's room.



(Ahmed and Razia - Meera's parents.

Aadil and Nadia - Meera's elder brother and sister-in-law.

Azira - Aadil and Nadia's daughter, and Veeru's first love.

Zaheer and Asma - Meera's younger brother and sister-in-law.

Rehan and Sameer - Zaheer and Asma's sons

Aadil's family is no more. A year a er the death of Aadil and Ananth, Nadia had a massive heart attack in her sleep and took her last breath. And a er a year Azira too passed away due to cancer.)

Hello!!

It's me your author who keeps you waiting now a days. And I'm really sorry for that. I'm stuck while writing. So, I thought that a late update with clear mind was better than an early update with messy brain.

I know, I have promised to give two updates per week. But I can't give until a few days, hope you understand it. ☹

Anyways, I hope you guys have liked the update. ☹

Keep smiling and take care!❤



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