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"Dean, come help me with this dress." I called out from my room,
currently stuck in a South Asian style dress Ayesha was kind enough
to lend me for her party later today. I was out of breath from the
struggle, my arms frozen above my head and face scratchy from the
sewn in diamonds as I waited for his footsteps.
I could feel him pause at the scene, taking me in and I only sighed in
defeat. I looked like I was stuck in a wormhole of pretty fabric. The
dress was long enough that I didn't need to wear any leggings
underneath, standing in my underwear and bra as Dean failed to hide
his amusement.
"You look nice." He said lightly, grabbing ahold of the end of the dress
and yanking it down. Once it fell past my knees I blew hair out of my
face and playfully shoved him aside, seeing him dressed and ready in
shalwar kameez Ayesha's brother let him borrow.
                                                                     a
"And you look like the white boy my mom told me not to tangle with."
His amusement only rose as he sat on my bed, watching me clip my
hair back so I could start my makeup.
"Will the other aunties only see me as a white boy as well?"
"No, you'll be treated kindly. I, however, will be seen as a disgrace...I
fucked you before marrige."
I could see him slant his head to the side in confusion. "We never
fucked."
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While smearing primer on my face, I turned. "You've seen me naked,
baby. That's enough scandle to put me in jahannum."
"Jahannum?"
"Hell."
"Fuck."
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I cracked a smile at that, moving onto my other products and Dean
stayed silent, watching me intently from the bed. My hair was already
washed and dried, the curly strands resting half an inch above my
shoulder and I would probably leave it out. The dawat or get together
Ayesha was having was set at a banquet with dozens of guests, and
when it came to brown people you could never be overdressed.
I had finally finished my face and set it with spray, going over to my
bed to strap on my heels when Dean gently pushed me to sit,
switching our positions so he was the one on his knees in front of me
with one of my heels in hand. Silently, I put out my feet with a fresh
pedi I did myself yesterday and reached out to run my hands through
his hair.
"You've met Ayesha's family before, right?" I asked to fill in the silence
as he worked on securing the strap.
"Twice." He shrugged. "It was at Zayn's sister's wedding."
"Zayn has a sister?"
"He has two."
"Goodness, I thought he was an only child. He never brings them up."
"Well he is the youngest," Dean slid my lehenga up so he could bend
forward and kiss my inner thigh before moving on to the other foot.
"Both of his sisters are married and gone. They have about four and
six year di erence to him."
                                                                     a
"Ah, that makes sense. Will Zayn's family also be coming then? It
seems like their families are close."
Dean was silent for a few seconds making me frown as he finished
strapping my other foot. I sat up, taking his face in my hands.
"Not close?"
"Zayn's parents went through a messy divorce...his father wasn't
very..."
Ah. I understood immediately, instantly feeling sad for Zayn. Growing
up with a parent who didn't love you like they're supposed to was
heartbreaking and damaging.
"He would sometimes stay over at Ayesha's house when things got
too bad and then eventually moved out."
"I'm glad he has you." I told Dean, finding his friend group so
precious. They may not have been family by blood, but they were
every bit more than mine ever was.
"You look good, Soph." Dean leaned forward and kissed me so and
quick.
"So do you," I murmured back, sliding my hands to his chest and
checking him out. "You look good in Pakistani clothing. We look like
we could get married this second."
He stayed silent at that, but the smirk li ing the corner of his lips
made me roll my eyes with a grin, playfully pushing him away from
me.
"Shut up. Lets get going, pretty boy. The food awaits."
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I stood up, lending down a hand for him to hold and he took it with a
smile, letting me drag him to the living room to gather the rest of our
things.
"Oh fuck." I muttered under my breath once I saw what lay ahead.
Aunties and uncles minging about with their kids, all decked out in
fancy things with Guess bags on their tables and desi music blaring
out of the speakers. It reminded me of my mom and the parties we'd
go to when I was young, the only memory of stu ing myself so full of
samosas I could barely talk.
My eyes watered slightly and I stood there with Dean's hand a
reassurance on my back, the gentle sooth of him rubbing up and
down settling me down.
"You guys made it!" I heard from the side, glancing over to see Ayesha
with a red dress, her hijab the same colour and her dupatta hanging
o her shoulder mirroring me.
Her arms were open to accommodate a hug and I responded back,
hugging her with intent.
"Thank you for inviting us." I told her, my eyes shining with sincerity
and she so ly smiled at me, reaching down to take my hand in hers
and squeeze.
"Of course, Sophia. Hi Dean, I overheard some of the Aunties calling
you handsome so you better watch out before they marry you."
"But what about jahannam?" He asked her, confused and Ayesha
looked taken back for a second before bursting into laughter, taking
my hand in hers and dragging me to a table where the rest of our
friends were at.
                                                                     a
"You taught him the word hell?"
"No..." I denied, innocent.
She giggled again as we approached everyone else. Vanessa was also
dressed like me, having borrowed another one of Ayesha's dresses
while Alyan and Zayn were wearing thawbs, a traditional middle
eastern clothing. It made sense since they were both from the middle
east. Turning to the side, I saw that Brandon was also wearing
shalwar kameez and I assumed he must have borrowed it from
someone as well.
"Holy shit you all look so good." I told them, pulling out my chair
beside Dean to sit. Vanessa was on my le while Dean was on my
right, one space le for Ayesha but she quickly le most likely to greet
other guests. "You should wear traditional clothes more o en." I told
Zayn and Alyan. Snapping Zayn out of his Ayesha-fixed trance.
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"You don't look so bad yourself, Soph. Ayesha's mom was planning
on taking you shopping for some more brown clothes if you'd like.
She wants you over at her house like everyday now."
"But I only met her once...how does she like me so fast?" I had only
seen Ayesha's mom when I went over to pick up the dress with
Vanessa. She had invited me in, made me chai, and we talked about
regular things brown moms liked to talk about. School, rishtas and
marriage.
"How could anyone not like you?" Dean whispered in my ear and I
flushed, reaching under to squeeze his hand.
                                                                     a
"I would love to go." My heart felt so full saying that.
"You know if you bring Sunna Auntie some chocolate she'll love you
forever. How do you think I got into her good graces?" Zayn shrugged,
leaning back in his chair. Zayn had told us earlier that he knew some
urdu, especially a er how frequent he'd visit Ayesha and her family.
"She loves you because she gets to baby you." Brandon rolled his
eyes, reaching out to grab a spring roll.
"Hey, that's not true! I use my good looks and charm to get my way
into her heart. And chocolate."
We spent most of the party talking with each other, Zayn leaving
halfway to join Ayesha talking with others or staring at her before
they both made it back in time for the food. A er appetisers of spring
rolls and samosas, we moved on to dinner consisting of chicken
biryani, kebabs, naan, and multiple curries that had us going back for
seconds.
It felt like home. Everything felt like home. The atmosphere, the
people, the food. The music and slight dancing, the money handed
o as gi s to the family who set this all up.
I had small struggles talking with aunties because my urdu was rough
but I managed with Ayesha by my side.
"So Zayn," An auntie had come by our table, kulfi in hand. "Ap Ayesha
si shaddi kub karring he?" When are you going to marry Ayesha?
They both blushed, Zayn laughing awkwardly with a hand rubbing
the back of his neck. "Ah, auntie. You know I have to finish school
first, right? And Ayesha has other rishtas coming."
The auntie clicked her teeth, shook her head and gave him a look
before turning to Vanessa, her accent showing while she engaged
with her in english. I smiled at the sighed of Zayna and Ayesha trying
their best to avoid each other's gaze. They were beyond adorable
while they slowly sunk to the ground.
Earlier, Ayesha's dupatta had caught on to the thread of Zayn's
sleeve, tugging her back to him as they scrambled to get it o . It was
one of their many debacles of the night, many of the guests noticing
and them soon becoming the talk of town.
I was in the bathroom while they performed Isha prayer, overhearing
some aunties talk about it in the bathroom. They were speaking in
urdu, saying:
 "You know Sunna's daughter Ayehsa? Her and Zayn have been very
close this entire night."
 "Really? Are they engaged? Sunna never said anything before."
 "I don't think so. He's probably one of her boy friends."
 "Ayesha has a boyfriend??!"
 "No, Shazia. Boy. Friend."
 "Boy friend shmoy friend, what is this nonsense? They're perfect for
each other. Her dupatta even caught onto his sleeve! Amina, I'm
telling you that this is true love. Anyway, let me show you this thing
on Whatsapp—"
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I had le shortly a er, meeting Dean outside as we got ready to leave.
It was getting late and we both had work early tomorrow, saying our
goodbyes to everyone from the group. The event had been fun, there
was a photo booth set outside where we had taken multiple group
photos and the rest of our friends had dispersed soon a er leaving us
alone walking back to Dean's car.
I was exhausted for the most part, the party taking away the bulk of
my social battery and I nudged my shoulder into Dean, giving him a
tired smile. Letting out a yawn, he reached over and held my hand,
dragging me the rest of the way.
We had made it over to the passenger side, Dean opening the door
and waiting for me to get seated before reaching across over me and
buckling me in as I rested my head against the seat, closing my eyes
and waiting for him to start the vehicle.
"Did you have fun, baby?" He asked me quietly.
"Mhm." Was all I could manage, and I let out another yawn, finally
letting myself relax as Dean placed his free hand on my thigh. "It was
nice. Everything was so nice."
"I'm glad you enjoyed it," He murmured. "You looked really happy
talking with all the aunties."
"I haven't spoken Urdu to anyone in years. It felt nice being in a place
where I could celebrate my culture again without the guilt...I feel like
crying, is that weird?"
"Not weird at all, Soph. Do you wanna cry right now?"
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I thought about it for a moment, cracking open one eye so I could
look at him with a giddy smile. "No, I'm too tired. Will you spoon feed
me ice cream when we get home?"
"No, sugar makes you hyper and you need sleep. You worked a 12
hour shi before we came here...you need rest."
"You're no fun."
"I can be fun..." He gave me a mischievous look, his hand on my thigh
inching towards my centre. I flushed, slapping both hands on his to
stop his movements.
"I thought you said I needed rest?"
"You do and orgasms make you very sleepy. You're so cute a er, so
so and sweet it makes me want to hold you in my arms forever."
Ili ed his hand so I could kiss his palm, pressing it against my chest.
"Stop being cute before I fuck you and we get fined for public
indecensy."
"Well, come on then." He whispered. "Sit on my dick since you want it
so bad."
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I squirmed in my seat at his tone of voice combined with his words.
"You're evil."
"And yet, you're still here."
I pause, silent, before kissing his hand again murmuring against the
skin. "And yet I'm still here." I agreed quietly.
Dean pulled over at the side of the road, stopping the car and
unbuckling his seatbelt before turning to me, fisting my hair and
pulling me towards him in a deep, breathless kiss that lasted minutes.
It ended with us pulling away for air, Dean's fingers threaded in my
hair and my hands gripping his shoulders for support.
"What was that for?" I asked, still breathless and now weak in the
knees.
He glanced from my mouth back to my eyes, the corner of his lips
kicking up. "I just wanted to kiss you."
"You couldn't wait?"
"I never can with you."
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My eyes were drowsy when I stirred awake, blinking up at Dean's face as he carried me into our apartment complex. a "Dean?" I mumbled, confused, causing him to look down with a so expression. "Shh, baby. Go back to sleep. I'm just taking us home." "Mhm," I mumbled, closing my eyes and snuggling into him like a kitten. "Home. I have a home now." He smelled like he always does, citrus and vanilla creating a comfortable and safe place for me to fall asleep to. I always seemed to do that more o en now, falling asleep to Dean. Whether it'd be his presence or his low voice as he reads out loud, I always felt comfortable enough to fall asleep next to him. I could never do that before, not with anyone. I would always stay awake, alert, terrified of something bad happening to me but now I had never had more peace in my life. As the darkness pulled me under completely, I felt him press a kiss to my forehead and heard him quietly say a sentence that had me torn and put back together all at once. "You'll always have a home with me, Sophia." A/N: GENUINELY a huge apology for taking a month long break but I'm back!! (i think). á theres roughly around 15 chapters le to rewrite and maybe another Dean POV scene (along with a new Ayesha and Zayn scene from this chapter!!) a i needed a break a er writing chapters during school and so when summer break started i fell o and took time for myself. a anyway, i love this book and would never want to abandon it. i wanna get it done before school starts up again. i love you guys, thank you for reading, ari ♡ •••