

Whispers of a Night Unfolding

The evening was whispered through the trees, with leaves blanketing the earth like memories from some season past. The stars hung low, winking in a sky that had seen centuries of beginnings and endings. I sat there, letting the soft hum of the forest-rivers rushing, frogs singing-pull me into a trance. As my eyes closed, there came into my mind an all-too-familiar presence, so soft yet insistent, like the far-off jingle of tinkling bangles in the breeze.

Footsteps on the dried leaves snapped me back. "Her again?" my friend's voice was soft yet inquisitive, piercing the silence. I nodded in return, and the weight of past encounters hung between us. He sat next to me. "Tell me," he insisted, eager to hear the story I knew so well.

My mind flashed back to that day, where it all had started.

"Are you going to the boss's gathering?" my colleague had asked earlier, though I barely paid attention, buried under piles of documents-year-end reports, numbers staring back at me, taunting my lack of enthusiasm.

By the time I finally arrived at the boss's place, night had already staked its claim on the streets. The house was a beacon of light, the balloons swinging in the air like so many colored spheres, and I was outside, tugging on my suit. It was a revelry of a night, but that didn't really stir anything in me. I would have liked to be home and catch the big match on TV.

Inside, the air hummed with small talk and chirps of laughter that reverberated off the walls. I moved through the space, half-lost in my thoughts, when a melody from a piano stole my attention. And then I saw her—a vision wrapped in red and gold, her presence setting fire to the room. She was unlike anyone else. Something in the way she pulled me in; this was another world entirely.

I had turned away, shaking off the feeling; yet, her smile-warm and effortless-kept drawing me back. My mind spiraled into a whirlpool of painting pictures of us together-moments to come, futures envisioned in split seconds. I caught her gaze one time too many, my heartbeat racing every single time. Her eyes sparkled with some joy that I couldn't quite comprehend, and everything that was around me suddenly seemed dull by comparison.

I must have looked such a fool, standing there and word-brained, unable to put anything together-something remotely resembling a decent thought, that is. I excused myself and then ran into the washroom, needing to regain my composure from whatever spell she had put upon me without even knowing it.

Returning to the party, I found her leaning against a pillar, as if awaiting somebody. Her smile was still there, soft and magnetic at the same time, drawing people into its warmth. Something in her carriage spoke volumes without words, a quiet grace. The next thing I knew, she was beside me, her hand resting lightly on mine. My world shifted in that instant-her touch sending a shiver through me, something dormant inside.

We found ourselves sitting beside the pool, feet dipped in cool water, talking about life and dreams and everything in between. Time seemed to wrap itself around us, as if the world out there did not matter.

Reality got a catch-up. She looked down at her phone and her face registered concerns. The screen was full of missed calls from her father. Panicked, she hastily shared her username with me and before I could say much, vanished into the night.

With the excitement boiling inside me, I walked back home, playing every moment in my head. Barely did I notice the road beneath my feet; it was like I was floating. The moment I reached my room, I got hold of my cell phone and furiously searched for her online. And there she was, dressed in red, looking far more stunning in her pictures.

Just then, I saw the result of that missed game. Manchester United won 2-0. It was the perfect end to a night which from the very start felt like a dream.