

Travelling Alone



KHUSHI JAKHAR

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CHAPTER ONE



As children ran around the room, playing with cars, dolls, and balloons; it felt like I have reached a place where everyone was happy and no one was sad or tensed. It surely was a place where each of us wants to reach but we don't realize we can create it wherever we want and whenever we want to. The core of our unhappiness, tension, and stress is us. We want success, money, fame, and respect in society making them a standard by which the extent of happiness can be measured.

I sat on the nearby couch. I was a newbie in the babysitter world, and it was my first day at the job.

The manager warned me that this was the most annoying group of children one is ever going to meet. I was to make sure that no one made any nuisance or engaged in fights with each other and to ensure that everyone had their food by time. I was wondering about different things when a girl came and sat by my side. I gave her a warm smile to make her feel comfortable. I was surprised to see her because she was a fourteen-year-old girl, which was surprisingly old to need a babysitter. I asked her and she told that she was there just for today as her mother was out of the station. She told her name was Kisha. She was a shy, introvert child who did not indulge much in talking. I was the one to initiate the conversation each time and she would try to end it as soon as possible. So, I asked her “how are your studies going?”

“Good.” She replied.

“What’s your favourite subject?”

She replied “English.”

The talks were so straightforward and brief that there seemed only one person interested in it and that was me. I wanted to ask her a question and couldn’t resist my desire.

“Would you mind if I ask you why are you so introverted?” I finally asked her.

“I am not an introvert, just a little homesick.” She said.

“Okay. So, you want to talk with me, right?” she asked.

I nodded. Now I felt a little awkward because she got turned into an extrovert in just a few seconds. I didn’t want to look dumb, stupid or sullen; so, I began “What’s the best memory or experience of your life?”

“Umm...I don't exactly remember the best day of my life. But yeah, I went on a tour to Mussoorie recently and I learned about a million lessons, had lots of fun, laughed like never before and even cried sometimes but I am happy that it's going to be a lifelong memory. So, do you want to hear about it? It's going to be super long, better think again.” She waited patiently for my response.

“Not a problem, I love stories. Go on about it, I am here.” I replied in affirmative.

CHAPTER TWO



“The world is a book, those who don’t travel read only a page.”

—St. Augustine

“So, it began from when we got the forms for the tour. I wasn’t sure if I’ll be going. I and my best friends were debating over it. I and Diya were not interested as much as Zoya was. But when I went home and told my parents about the tour, they wanted me to go and so I submitted the form along with the money. Diya’s parents were not yet convinced and Zoya too submitted her entry after two days. However, she was

returned her form and money because the entries were full by then. So, I was all alone on the tour with none of my close friends going with me.

Although I have a friend named Yamini who was going, she is also my neighbour and we both sit together in the bus and even go for cycling in the evenings. The tour was right after our exams, so our last exam was Hindi and the next day we were to leave for Mussoorie at around 10 p.m. I was still super excited even though I didn't have my besties accompanying with me. I was a shy girl, actually, I still am. You guessed it right. I wanted to explore, socialize (because that is my weak point), and of course make new friends. I thought that this new experience will help to make me confident, independent and even help me to explore my real self.

So, it was the night of the departure, my father and Yamini's father drove us to our school. We were required to board the buses immediately because we were late as usual. I hugged my parents and my little brother who always causes me trouble. I went inside the Volvo with my friend and the teacher in charge made us both sit on the front seats. Yamini's best friend, Keshu was also coming, so of course, I couldn't expect her to remain full time with me. Keshu was late and when at last she arrived she took a seat with a girl named Veronica. Yamini and Keshu wanted to sit together, so Yami (her pet name) asked me if I could exchange my seat with Keshu. I had seen Veronica several times in school but never actually had interacted with her.

But then I felt it was a great opportunity to make new friends, so I agreed. I sat with her and we had a quite good conversation. She adored sleeping and as a result,

she slept quite early. I could understand that and didn't want to wake her up. So, finding nothing to do I took out my comforter and tried to sleep, but couldn't.

At around 1:30 a.m. we stopped at a Dhaba, used the restroom and strolled around. Some even brought some snacks like chips and cold drinks. Thereafter we boarded our buses. I had a little bit of conversation with Veronica as it was her third tour and it was my first. I was the only girl from my section and Veronica had the same situation. She said "If one is alone, it is just the traveling time when you feel a little lonely otherwise it gets fine once we reach the destination.

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