Chapter I

“Beta, wake up! It’s already eight. You are going to be late for college.” My favorite voice (*not at this moment though*) broke my dream. It was Mumma. Adding to this was the alarm that started buzzing all of a sudden. I wished I had the strength right now to break it into pieces, smash it like a piece of popcorn. But well, *Ugh…* I stopped the fucking alarm first. I can’t do anything with the second.

I stroked around the bed in search of my phone, trying to locate it by letting my hands wander around, but I couldn’t find it. I forcefully opened my right eye, trying to look at the clock on the wall.

“Mumma! It is just seven 7:55… I still have five minutes left! Let me sleep,” I whined, burying my face back into the pillow while snuggling down my blanket.

Mothers will never understand the affinity with that extra sleep of five minutes. It’s like a ‘cheating in exams for five minutes’ reward.

“C’mon beta, get up now,” Mumma said again, trying to break my bond with sleep. But sleep loved me too, and hey, it was stubborn enough not to leave me. Mumma couldn’t see that love, so she switched off the AC.

“Uff…” I mumbled as I let go of my loving pillow, and then regretted it promptly. I felt sorry for sleep though. I threw the blanket aside, yawned and leaned back on the headboard. I rubbed my eyes trying to open them up fully, and then shifted my gaze towards Mumma.

She was doing her daily chores: taking away the washed clothes from the clothesline and putting them in the wardrobe. With her arms piled with neatly folded clothes, her eyes fell on me, “good,” she said with that ever-smiling face and shoved them back into the wardrobe.

I smiled back lazily.

“Take a shower and have your breakfast,” she said and slammed the wardrobe doors shut. Watching me utterly immobile, making no movement whatsoever, she looked at me and retorted, “Gooooo!” pointing her finger towards the washroom.

“I’ll come for breakfast in ten minutes,” I said, still reluctant to leave my bed.

“Fine,” she said and went away.

I rose grudgingly from the bed and strolled my way towards the washroom. I took a shower and came out wrapped in a towel with water beads streaming down my shivering body.

I walked towards my wardrobe and then stood vacantly in front of it. Then I stared at what I have for another good whole minute. I dug through the clothes, and tugged out a black shirt and a cream trouser.

“Mumma will definitely scold me for this rummage,” I mumbled to myself after looking at the chaos I had created hunting for my clothes. I got dressed, grabbed my bag from the bed and walked towards the hall.

“Mumma, have you seen my phone?” I called out, suspecting it in the hall.

“Yeah, it’s here. You’ve got a message from Mohit,” Mumma shouted from the kitchen.

“Ohh… What does it say?” I asked, walking towards the kitchen.

“W-T-F…. Where are you?” she responded naively.

“Shit...” I snatched the phone from her hand abruptly, startling her.

The phone juggled around my hand for few seconds until I was able to grasp it tightly. I cursed myself for allowing her to read it. *I’ll kill you, Mohit.* I feigned a smile at Mumma.

“What’s WTF?” she asked.

“Umm…Well…. WTF means…” My mind was blank; I couldn’t find any words to respond. “It means… what the… what the…”

“What… what the, what the?” she said, becoming irked.

“What the…fish, Mumma. What the fish.” my smile turning into a grin, wanting her to believe my ‘phony’ full form. However, she didn’t smile or grin.

“What the fish?” she said, perplexed. “He wants to eat fish? Okay call him, I’ll make fish today.” finally she grinned, thanks to the fish though.

I breathed a great sigh of relief.

“Yeah, okay… I’m going now,” I said as I turned to go out of the door.

“Wait! Wait!” she said.

I could have fled away, but not listening to Mumma can become dangerous at times. I walked back to the hall and plopped on the couch.

I was grinning at her when she came out of the kitchen walking towards me, but my face could no longer keep the grin on when my eyes got a glimpse of the cup she had in her hand. *Doodh… No, I’m not going to drink that… Yuck!* I turned my face away, acting like a wayward kid.

She landed the cup on the table with a thud. “Don’t show me that tantrums. It’s coffee,” she said and promptly seized my gaze towards her.

My pupils enlarged, forcing me to stare at her with my widened eyes. *Did she read my mind?* I appreciated her intelligence and moved my eyes to the cup to reassure. That was, indeed, hot coffee, wafting its pleasant steam to my nostril, inviting me to take a sip.

“Thank you, Mumma,” I said.

I cradled the cup with both hands, leaned my head to the rising steam, blew on it softly; as my lips touched the cup, my shoulders were rising slightly on its luscious aroma. A few drops of coffee slid over my tongue, and it pleased my throat.

Every mother is like a magician, or maybe they just have the power to make any dish yummy. No one could have stopped themselves from gulping down that coffee in less than five minutes, even with their throat burning.

She smiled and sat next to me.

“You should get your own coffee shop at our college. Most of the students will bunk their lectures just for your coffee,” I said, taking another sip.

“Just fool your Mumma, no?” she said, smiling.

“No, Mumma! You should get your coffee shop,” I said, gulping the remaining coffee and peeping into the cup to check if there was any drop of coffee left, but I had already gulped all of it.

“Okay. Now go. It’s already late,” She said, accentuating her smile.

I tilted my head and looked at the wall clock. It showed 8:40 AM.

“Yup…”  I got up from the couch and slung the bag over my shoulder.

“Bye, Mumma. Take care.”

“You too,” she said and walked me to the door.

I pulled the door and left.