

A Terrible Surprise

She loves sleeping but if you wake her up, brace yourself because you will witness the evolution of a woman to a monster that's deprived years of sleep. But for him, there is no better time than to reveal his secret.

It is way past 2 in the morning she is sound asleep. One needs to make sure not to use any harsh methods to wake her up as she is the most unpredictable at this time of night, but he knew very well how to do so. He nudged her slowly, whispering her name in the ear.

"Hey, wake up, I need to tell you something".

It's not easy to bring her into consciousness nevertheless he continued his plight. She started to show signs of awareness.

"Hey what happened?" she replied in a low and languid voice

Oh... he heaved sigh of relief; she didn't seem violent.

'That's a good start', he thought.

"I've been wanting to tell you this from so long but I couldn't make up my mind. You need to listen to me carefully"

Her eyelids feeling stiff. She struggled to have a glimpse of his face. "Dint you sleep yet"

"No, I just couldn't. Unless I tell you this, I don't think I ever will"

Still in "Why do u sound like it's something serious? What is it? Just tell me."

He started to breath heavily she could almost hear him inhale. He kept twitching his eyebrows restlessly. Struggling to keep a straight face he took a deep breath.

"I think I like someone"

Her heart stopped for a moment, unable to move or think. What is he saying? Did she hear it right? Was he joking?

"What do you mean like... What kind of like?"

He looked at her helplessly and said "I don't know"

She turned furious "You can't be serious"

I mean, it's okay to like someone, there isn't anything wrong with that. Come on...it's not like you could never fall for someone else. It's bound to happen, but you just need to ignore and move on.

"But I tried...It's been a while that I'm trying. I just can't stop thinking about her. It hasn't been easy for me"

She wanted to ask so badly. What if it's someone she knows? What if its someone close to her? How could she ever face that woman again? No! it's dreadful, she thought.

"Its okay... its absolutely normal to like someone else but you don't have to give it much thought. You just like her right... It's not like you are in love, or are you?"

He looked puzzled.

"Why aren't you saying anything?"

He nodded... A chill ran down her spine. The entire world came crashing down.

Her voice raised, "No! you are lying... I don't believe you. You can't just be in love with someone you saw, I don't believe you. Please tell me you're lying. Oh God! I can't handle this" She covered her face in her palms.

"I wish I could... but every moment after our acquaintance, I feel like I'm cheating on you. It's been suffocating. I don't know what I should do I am so confused"

Her throat felt heavy. Trying to fight back her tears she struggled to talk.

"Listen... You don't have to think too much, just forget all of this...okay... you love me, don't you? I know you love me"

He doesn't seem to be moved by her words.

She has never seen this side of him. Yesterday they kissed each other goodnight before going to bed and cuddled next each other's warm, it was perfect but now... What has happened? Never did she imagined a day like this would arrive She looked at him intently for a response. He turned pale.

"I don't know"

Tears rolled down her eyes. "What do you mean? We have been together for four years. You do love me. We were there for each other through the worst. We wouldn't have lasted if we didn't love each other"

He looked down, trembling

"I'm not sure if I love you anymore"

Her eyes filled with tears she couldn't control anymore sobbing bitterly she asked him

"Are you going to leave me? Pls don't even think about it Oh God!! Pls don't leave me"

She begged him holding his arm tightly crying on his shoulder. He did not even look at her.

"Please don't leave me. Is there something wrong with me. I can change all that. Is it because I gained a few pounds recently? I can lose it or is it me complaining about your mom, I can stop that too. I can do whatever you want. Just don't leave me"

"Even if you do, I am not sure if I still love you. I don't think, I do anymore."

"You know..."

She stopped abruptly she couldn't find words to convince him.

She felt terrible, so terrible inside. The love of her life wants to leave her. Her world around was crumbling and moreover it's come to a point that she must beg him to stay. She felt even more terrible when he said he didn't love her anymore.

She tried once again. "Baby Please listen to me... How can you just leave me...huh? You know how much I love you. We can forget this chapter. I will never ask you anything about her. We can make this work. We sure can. Just tell me that we can.

He didn't budge. He hardly even moved.

He isn't the same person she met four years ago... Things have changed. There isn't much she could do. He has gone too far away from her. She laid on the bed covering her face with her elbows, wailing, like a helpless little child.

The morning, he found himself waking up to an empty bed. He woke up in panic.

Where did she go?

He checked the toilet, the kitchen the other bedroom and the balcony. He couldn't find her. He opened the cupboard and realized that she had emptied her stuff. Later he found her, packing rest of her stuff. He called out to her

"Where are you going?"

She didn't respond. She walks out sliding the glass door behind. "Where are you going?"

"Back to my house"

"Wait! Let's finish our talk"

I don't think there is anything left to talk. We did that yesterday and your opinion is quite clear to me.

"Listen...why don't we just calm down. You don't have to do this"

Sorry? ... Do you have any idea what you told me last night. Now you want me to listen to you. I can't believe I begged you to stay with me.

"No..." He said softly. "Listen to me just don't do anything rash now. Be calm. You don't have to move out just now"

"Which means... I don't have to move out now but later...right? Well, thanks a lot for your consideration. I can live without that."

I was wondering all night... just why is it that you couldn't open your heart sometime in the morning about your little misadventure of yours but now it makes sense. You know that I'm the most vulnerable when right after waking up from sleep... right? If you would have told me now, you know that I would have never begged you.

Her phone rang she answered "Yes? Please wait... I will be right there"

The cab was waiting outside the apartment. She opened the front door, pulled her trolley bag behind her, and walked towards the lift. As she moved further away, she wanted to take one last glance but resisted her urge. She so badly wanted to beg him but no.

She placed her trolley behind and got inside the car. As they moved further away, she saw him standing outside the gate. Her eyes filled with tears once again, not being able to register all these new changes in her life.

I would hear other people, the stories of their cheating partners, but never expected to go through one myself. People and their ways can be unpredictable. You think you know them after spending all those years but realize they are not what you thought. All those moments you had with them seems futile. You feel worthless, ashamed, and stupid. You feel horrible cheated upon.

'Her tears didn't stop pouring down. Will she ever be able to accept and move on? It doesn't feel like she ever will'

The car turns a sharp U. Now 3 blocks more, she thought. Her heart raced.

'What will I tell her?'

She couldn't think of any reason.

'Should I tell her or act like nothing has happened? What's the point in hiding? She will have to know at some point. How long can I hide? Anyways she decided not to cry in front of her at any cost.'

As the car parked outside the gate, she opened the car trunk and removed her baggage. She could hear faint sounds from her mother's favorite TV show.

She moves inside quietly her mom sees her "Welcome...welcome my baby. How are you? Did u miss Amma?"

With all her strength she gave a faint smile back. Mrs.Latha sensed something is not right.

"Are you okay? What happened Where is my son in law?"

"Just me, she shrugged. He stayed back"

"Is everything alright? You don't seem very happy. Did u guys fight?"

"No Amma... It's nothing... thought I wanted to see you so here I am"

"Hmm... why do I sense something else? You are not telling me something. What is it?"

"Why are you panicking? I said there is nothing right."

"Your face is telling something else. I know you too well, your face never lies"

"Okay... I just don't feel like we're on the same page so...hmm...we thought we should take a break from each other.

Wait... What? Just like that... What happened? Latha looked concerned. How long are you going to take a break?"

“Amma Please stop it. I just got home and the only thing you’re worried is, when will I go back? Won’t you let me breathe a little?”

Latha looked perplexed not knowing what to do she kept quiet. She realized that her daughter needed the most was some space.

Her room is well kept and dusted. Nothing looked out of place. It remains just like how she left it yesterday, but last time he was there too. They were happy at least that’s what she thought. She couldn’t help but feel overwhelmed with those memories. She remembered how they watched a late-night movie on the laptop happily in each other’s arms. Their first kiss in her room, cuddling under the blanket. How happy she was. She couldn’t understand what went wrong. She lost it again and broke into tears.

‘At least I kept my promise I made to myself’. She thought

She stayed in her room all day, did not want to be confronted again by her mother.

Latha couldn’t help but feel worried. She has no idea what happened to her little girl. She couldn’t imagine her get hurt. What could he have done? Must be something silly... She has been inside her den for hours now. She knocked the door.

“Hey aren’t u hungry? Lunch is ready... Come on”

“I’m not hungry Amma”

“What? No way... You better come out now. It’s been too long. What are you doing there?”

“I just want to be alone for some time more”

“You better come out and have something. I’m waiting here and am not going to have without you”

“Amma don’t worry about me. I am fine. Please don’t skip lunch, you need to take your meds too.

“Alright! I will not skip lunch unless you open this door. Let me just see you”

Bundled in her wooly blanket she walks up halfheartedly to the door and opens it. Not wanting to give her mother a chance to take a good look at her she turned her face away.

Latha sensed it isn’t some silly little fight. Her daughter looked unbearably in pain.

“What happened? Please tell me dear. I am getting really worried.”

“Dint I say it’s just a break?” She snapped.

“Yeah, I understand, but you know that I’m always there for you no matter what.”

She couldn’t keep it anymore

“Amma, how does it feel when that one person you give your all does not love you back? What would you feel? Her voice broke into little sobs, and she burst into tears.

Latha felt helpless, she knows her daughter is very strong. All these years, after the death of her husband, it was her daughter who kept her sane. She knew at once, something grave must have happened between them.

Her mother held her face, wiped her tears and hugged her.

It's almost midnight and they could hear some familiar voices behind the door. Just then the bell rang. Latha was alarmed. She wondered, who could it be?

She knocks on her daughter's door. She whispered "Someone just rang the bell"

Her daughter opened the bedroom door. They exchanged looks and the bell rang once again.

She hesitated for a moment then thought.

'What worse could happen?'

After all that she went through, she felt like there wasn't anything more to lose.

She moved closer to the front door leaned towards the handle and turned it slightly.

"Surprise!!" She could hear something pop and some confetti falling all over her.

'Who are these people?' It was dark outside; she could not see clearly. 'Ohh... It's the gang'

'Why is he here with a cake?' She couldn't make sense of what's happening. 'Is it a dream?'

That's when she realized it's her birthday today. She completely forgot the date I mean who would remember after lastnight situation.

Latha behind her was astonished she knew it was her daughter's birthday but seeing her misery she couldn't bring herself to wish her. She could see some familiar faces. Oh yes, it's her old friends.

Aishwarya her collegemate and best friend was there too but looks like she doesn't look like she is aware if so she would have never agreed to this. She came forward and gave her a tight hug

"Happy Birthday girl!! Did we scare you? I'm so sorry baby"

She felt awkward with so many people inside. She wanted them all out of the house. It seemed unbearable. All these mixes of emotions she felt like screaming on top of her voice.

There he comes from behind. He smiled at her holding a cake with a candle lit.

"Happy Birthday love" he kissed her on the cheek." "Come on blow the candle"

She stood still in disbelief; she couldn't absorb the whole idea. Wasn't she supposed to feel happy? That he is there now, right next to her but she wasn't, in fact she felt terribly bitter. She couldn't bring herself to enjoy the moment or forget whatever he said to her yesterday early morning. This was unbearable. She didn't know how to react. She did not want to make anyone upset and worry. She didn't want to make a scene, yet she couldn't bring herself to smile either.

"Um... I think we need to talk" she said "Can you just come inside"

His face turned grim. He slowly moved towards her.

"I know last time I forgot your birthday but see... I told you, I would make it up to you. I am so sorry for last night; I knew it was a little harsh but it's just a prank. I wanted to just scare you that's all. But you just packed up all your stuff and..." she cut in...

"Could you just listen to me for once"

"Yes... oh... yes"

"I really had a hard time I don't know if u were aware of it, but I couldn't process what was going on"

"Yeah, I understand, can we do this later, I mean they are all waiting for us. We can do this later when all this is done"

"I think they can but I'm afraid I can't. I would like you to leave me now"

Latha had a hard time wondering what was going on. 'What were they talking about? Did they make up?

Guests started murmuring to each other. They were a taking quiet a long time. he walked out of the room looking rather disappointed behind her.

She looked at the crowd and said

"I am so sorry to have bothered you all, but all this was never planned. I feel terrible to say this, but I need you guys to leave. Him and I need to talk. I hope you all understand"

They looked at each other and shook their heads in wonder and slowly moved out with their little party buckets.

Once all left, she felt relieved. She told her mom

"Amma, I have decided to separate from him"

"What do you mean? Are you listening to yourself?"

"Amma, when he said he found love with someone else I was devastated. All my life, I have never felt this lonely. I could not help myself to understand what went wrong. I have always managed my life to cater to his needs. I tried to be someone he liked, I changed my likes to his I learnt to cook what he likes, listened to him, and supported him stayed next to him like a rock even though it may not have been the right thing too. Why? Because I loved him. I wanted to stay beside him no matter what, and do whatever I could, just to see him happy"

She then turned towards him

"These last few hours, I was just thinking...what went wrong with our happy life? I was committed, ready to do whatever it needs to, then what went wrong? That's when I realized that you never at once took an effort to make me feel the same. Maybe this may come off as if I am not thinking straight and I'm just being emotional and not thinking about the consequences, but no... I now know why? I never felt like I was being valued, not once. Even when you insensitively told me that he loved someone. You saw how heartbroken I was. Yet, you never made a point to clear it out. You were only bothered about the surprise. My head spun through my last 2 years with you and let me tell you it wasn't the kind of give and take I wanted. I have been disappointing myself and letting myself down being in a relationship with

someone who only valued themselves more. I meant no value to you because you didn't even think twice to say something so nasty and leave me like that for a silly surprise, don't my feelings matter?

"Hey! I am sorry, please let's just forget all this. We don't need to think about this ever again"

"You know what it's just not just this. But I think we don't need to see each other ever again. Do you know why? Because I never ever felt loved. I was the only one out there always for you. You never gave not even your 50%. So, I think it's time we part our separate ways"

He was stumped, speechless. He has never seen this side of her ever. Only when she has just been woken up from her sleep. Maybe she hasn't woken up yet. So, is that it Is this the end?

"You are still mad at me; I know that but listen, I can make this right. Don't you think you are taking this too seriously? Come on, it's just a prank and I gave you a great surprise doesn't that make up for it all? It was all for your birthday you do realize that.

"I know it's for my birthday, but my decision seems right after all because you still don't get it"

"What do you mean? You are not giving me another chance? How can you be so insensitive?"

"Oh no I have given you plenty but now it's just me."

"You are hurting me and it's not something I'm going to forget. Are you sure? Because if you say no now, you do know that there is no coming back" He looked at her furiously.

"I know... and I have never been this sure about something ever" She replied with a smirk "Thanks for letting me realize what I was missing. This little shock has been lifechanging"

