

TEENS and TWENTIES

Against The Tides

by Usaila Alam (Udita)

A gentle knock came at the door. "Bhabi, bhabi. I get up. It's six O'clock." Mitali opened her eyes reluctantly. Yet another day of chores, children, cooking, cleaning and tending. This daily routine was beginning to get her down, but nevertheless they had to be tended to.

Going to the kitchen Mitali began to knead the flour to make the bread and put a kettle on the other stove. She could not think of starting a day without a cup of tea. She still remembered her school days when she would have a bad temper all day if it started with a headache. But now-a-days she could not have such luxuries - for that was exactly what it seemed to her. After six years of marriage, two children and a demanding husband she couldn't even dream of having a temper. Now she was at the receiving end - taking in all that life had to throw at her side.

"Bhabi, the tea is failing." Banu, the maid who was cutting the vegetables, reminded her.

Mitali made the tea and took it back to her bedroom where she began to take out her husband's clothes, for he wanted everything to be perfect when he woke up. Mitali had a vague idea about marriage before, but of what she had seen of Asad, she did not like much. In the worldly sense Asad had everything that her parents wanted for her husband. He was well educated, working in a foreign firm with a good salary, a house in a posh area and a car. So what could have been better? So much, thought Mitali, so much more. In the first few months of their marriage Asad was like any other love born husband, attentive and kind and considerate and loving. But as time wore on so did Asad's attentions and now the only thing they had in common was the two lovely children, who were Mitali's whole life.

As the morning progressed Asad got up while Mitali helped to make the six year old Shithi ready for school. Running about the house was making her extremely exhausted; so she was glad when Asad left with Shithi. Meanwhile, Mitali began to clean the room as Banu cooked the day's meals. As she was busy with her work the phone rang. Mitali looked at the clock instantly - exactly eleven O'clock. "Hello," she spoke

"Why so quiet little bird" said the voice on the other end.

It was him again! Mitali's heart began to pound and she started twisting the telephone wires.

"Don't you have any work to do?" she said.

"Why, are you busy? he asked.

"What did you expect," she retorted.



"I expected that you would be expecting my call. Infact, I was really hoping."

"I am not a teenager. I am a busy housewife and a mother of two."

"Is that a reminder?" he asked.

"Hello."

"Why did you keep the phone down?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"So tell me how you started the day."

"As usual with a cup of tea."

"And what will you do, the rest of the day."

he would call regularly and she would spend these wonderful moments - away from everything just being herself again.

The phone rang again.

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