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## Happily ever after

JANEY sat there alone on a corner seat of the Airport terminal waiting room. Passengers and customs officers bustled past, boarding planes, checking luggage, doing whatever it was that they did. Oblivious to all the activity around her, she was looking down at her palms, quietly tracing the lines with her eyes. She was wondering if she could will those lines to change a bit, just a little, so that things wouldn't end up this way. She wished she didn't have to go, but then she had also wished for a lot of things in the past that never happened. For starters, although Mum's chronic illness had been recently cured and all their relatives and friends finally had a true reason to guiltlessly celebrate with them, Janey still wished she could stay with her a little longer and take care of her. But Mum had been adamant that she should go. The reasons were strong and when she had weakly protested, Mum had firmly said, "You need to

complete you studies honey. It's everything your dad and I have been wanting all along."

But that wasn't the only reason she wished she didn't have to go. If things were different, she would have fought with the world to not make her leave. But then her stars were no longer there for her. She had lost. And now she was running away. The mere thought of it all made a shudder and she let out a sob. Now was not the time to break down again, she thought. Janey gulped down some air and tried to stop the tears from falling. But would they listen?

Once upon a time, years ago, she and her friends used to laugh about heartbreaks of other people. No, it was not funny anymore, was it? Her heart was not broken, it was shattered. He was a married man now. He'd reached his happily ever after. The thought made her sob again. He had never taken all those moments spent with her as anything out of ordinary. Those were just fun moments with

a younger friend.

But how could he not realise that she loved him? Wasn't it obvious? Did she talk to others like that? What about the conversations at night on the phone talking about out-of-the-blue topics and laughing so much? All those hilarious moments and inside jokes shared at practically all the fast-food joints in the city, alone with him? Didn't he see it in her eyes when she laughed fondly at him whenever he chose the wrong item from the menu and later claimed that they had exchanged his item with hers? What about the times they had both waited half the day, nearly starving, just for the right moment so that they could have lunch with just each other? No it wasn't only the funny moments. There were other ones too, when she was sure that he had felt something for her. There were the awkward touches, the flirtatious fights, and the serious talks about family problems, things he never told anybody else, just her. She had been so sure he loved her too! She had just waited for him to confess his feelings, then the months passed and he didn't.

Two months ago he had been so happy and nervous when he had called her and said he wanted to tell her something. He had travelled half the city to pick her up and they had one of the best lunches ever. But when she had asked him, he had silently looked at her for some time and then refused to tell anything. Janey had thought maybe he was finally going to confess. She'd been so happy! But hey, life's bitter. A month later everybody knew he was getting married.... No, not with Janey, but someone else.

She didn't cry when she'd heard it all, not yet. But she'd refused to talk to him or pick up his calls and then later she deleted his number. At first Janey had been angry, but when the days to the wedding crept nearer, she felt her strength wavering. She'd cried like a baby for the 1<sup>st</sup> time on his engagement party. She didn't go, of course. Then just yesterday, hours before the wedding, it hit. She realised if she didn't tell him then, she would never be able to tell him. It must've been an unearthly power that had allowed her to talk to the bridegroom alone. She let out a hollow laughter at the thought of thinking of him as the "bridegroom".

She didn't know how, but she'd confessed, finally, amidst sobs and laughs that she, Janey loved him! She had realised then as she said it to him, that she didn't want him to love her back, she just needed him to know that she loved him: then, now, later and forever. He hadn't asked if it was all a joke, which was a

relief, but he'd been stunned. He was about to say something, again. But he couldn't, this time not because he didn't seem to have the guts, but because his entourage of cousins had dragged him away. The wedding preparations were still on, the bride-groom needed to be with his relatives, after all. And that was that. The look he'd given her before he left had said it all. He didn't love her back.

She'd stood there for sometime, waiting for the feeling of numbness and compression (as if the air was crushing her from all sides) to pass. It didn't, and she quietly left. Her flight was up the next day and her future awaited her....

*Ring! Ring!*

She jerked out of her reverie as her cell phone rang in the airport lounge. It was probably her mother calling from outside the airport to ask if she was alright. Her eyes blurry from all the tears, Janey picked up the call.

"I love you," the maddeningly familiar voice said on the other side. Her heart skipped a beat, and then a few more.

"Look up, and let's talk," said the voice again. She looked up, and there he was, standing on the other side of the glass wall looking at her, a little smile playing on the corners of his mouth.

"What are you?"

"You always used to say that you wanted your happily ever after to start with the guy running after you and stopping you from leaving the country at the last moment. Here I am, and I'm stopping you from leaving. Please don't go. I love you and I'm not married, yet, because I want to marry you if you'll have me. I'm the biggest idiot in the world and please hate me because I couldn't confess before. I'd wanted to tell before but I thought you'd never like me and then the marriage idea was totally crazy, I didn't know what I was doing until you came yesterday. I'm so sorry Jan..."

"Just stop rambling will you?" Janey was crying and laughing at the same time.

"Wha-?" He stopped short, then smiled and quickly opened the glass doors parting them (God knows how he got so far in the airport, Janey thought).

Jogging slightly he reached her and whispered in her ears "I love you Janey, will you marry me?" His cheeks were glistening with tears too.

"Yes!" said Janey half laughing, half crying. "Happy happily ever after then," he said with a lopsided grin, and before she could say anything, he leaned towards her and kissed her right on the lips.

Yeah, happy happily ever after!

By Kimi

Book review

### Four past midnight

EXAMS and full-length novels do NOT go together. Furthermore, when you go through a streak of weird days populated by cranky carpenters who insist on hammering away at the crack of dawn on the very morning after you pulled an all-nighter, reality is the last thing you want to deal with. So when a book like *Four Past Midnight* comes along, can you really blame this book reviewer for jumping in joy?

*Four Past Midnight* is a neat collection of four Stephen King chillers. Unlike his other anthology *Different Seasons*, these stories are linked by the theme of reality vs. the surreal.

The collection kicks off with *The Langoliers*, which talks about an aeroplane that slips through a rip in the time-space continuum and flies back to yesterday, with horrifying consequences. This is followed by *Secret Window*, *Secret Garden*, which was later rendered into a movie starring Johnny Depp, about an author stalked by a psychopath who accuses him of plagiarism. The twist, although not entirely unexpected, still boggles the mind. The third story is *The Library Policemen*, which is essentially borrows a leaf from it, and mentions a creature that feeds on people's fears. The book finally wraps up with *The Sun Dog*, which is a stand-alone story that borrows characters from King's Castle Rock stories, and talks about a supernatural Polaroid camera. What makes these stories really good, other than the fact that they were written by King is the fact that they are so believable, bizarre elements notwithstanding. King's mastery over characterization makes them more than just horror stories.

So if you're bogged with a heavy schedule, and are looking for short, interesting reads, this is the perfect book for you.

By Sabrina F Ahmad

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### Kids Stars

#### The best things in my life

I would like to see a rainbow in the sky  
See the full and lovely moon at night  
In the fresh air I would love to fly my kite.

Hear the birds sing a song of old  
Sleep when it's very cold  
Hear grandma's lovely stories

About ghost and robbers not to worry.

Play in the rainwater

Ride in a scooter

I will go to the fair

Just enjoy the tricks and nothing to care.

Play with my friends

Go out with my parents

Then go to market and buy some thing

Dress, necklace, toys, food and a ring.

In the morning I would run

Have little fun

A time to rest

These simple things in my life are best.

By Kasfia Perviz From Doha, Qatar

#### The moon

Shines not at the noon!  
but glows in the dark night,  
the city basks in silvery  
sparkling light,  
shimmering crescent spreads  
bright beams while scores  
of glittering stars surround it  
in teams

By Pavana

### We are all family

We are all family,  
we fight for one another,  
since we are all sister and brother.

We eat together,

We fight together,

We die together,

And we play together!

The more people in the great family  
the better.

Family is us.

We don't hate in a family.

We love each other.

We must live in harmony.

Without each other,

life is a cracked egg.

We are one,

together we have fun.

When we run,

we don't leave one behind.

It doesn't matter if we look different  
we are still family!

By Tanvir Majlisch

### My request.....

AT this moment I am spending my vacation. It's the best time of the year for me. During this time I wanted to hang around with computer games, cartoon and WWE. But it wasn't possible because of my mom. She always tells me, "Read books, newspapers, and the holy Quran. Practice playing the piano and watch the news." "It's not fair mom, after a hard working tough year I should have total relaxation." In spite of that I'm doing these things for

the sake of my mom's happiness. Over the last few days, while watching TV news and reading newspaper I came to know some areas of our country are being seriously flooded, when I see children of my own age sitting on top of their thatched roof with their domestic animals.

They did have neither any food nor clothes, they had to live on stagnant rainwater maybe for days.

I was heartbroken to see all these sufferings. My desire is to help but I can't understand

stand how to do it. After a lot of thinking, I asked my mom, "How much money do you spend for me at tiffin per month?" "About 1500 taka" she exclaimed.

Taking a deep breath, I said to my mom, "I won't have tiffin for the next one month and donate this whole amount of money to the affected children."

I'm too young, it's not possible for me to do anything more than this. So my humble request to all of my school mates, friends, teachers and relatives please, please help them. Because my mom says they're our brothers and sisters.

By Nadiat