

## READER SUBMISSION

# I'll Sing for You



MUHAMMAD WASIF HASAN

For Raiyan, his regular day at university would be trudging through classes, completing assignments he didn't even half remember doing or just plainly bunking his routine completely. The only place he loved was the library.

His way of relaxation would be wandering the long aisles of shelves filled with books, feeling the spines of the paperbacks, picking the ones he liked best and setting them down on a table to read. He would stay there till the library closed at 6 p.m. in the afternoon, after which he took a bus home. Wondering about the next day he would be back.

Maybe that was why she liked it there too.

One day, after coming to the library at around 4 p.m., Raiyan walked over to his usual spot at the back and started searching through the shelves. He was particularly surprised to find someone else sitting at the table there.

Leia's first few days at university had been quite hard since she was still getting used to the, well, the whole environment really. She had no friends, no acquaintances all because she was a little different from the others. She found sitting in the library to be of some comfort.

Both of them looked at each other for a full minute. Raiyan gave a half hearted wave,

"Hi there."

Leia sat there looking at him. Raiyan felt a bit uncomfortable now. She pointed at her ears.

Now Raiyan just stood there staring

at her.

Oh, so she was the new girl everyone was talking about.

Raiyan took a seat beside her. She handed him a notebook which said, "My name is Leia. It's nice to meet you" and indicated for him to write his reply.

"It's nice to meet you too, Leia. My name is Raiyan."

He handed it to her.

She smiled and wrote:

"Yes, I know. You came in late today during Math class. Our teacher didn't take it too lightly." At this point Raiyan burst out laughing. Leia stared at him.

"Why are you laughing?" she wrote. Raiyan was laughing so much he couldn't even write properly, "I forgot to do the Math homework today."

Her eyes widened, "You were doing it before you came?"

"Yes."

This time Leia started laughing. They kept talking till 6 pm after the library closed down and they both had to leave. Rain poured down outside. Raiyan took out his umbrella and held it over their heads. She looked at him and bowed her head a little: "Thank you."

He waited till it was time for both of them to leave. Leia's car came up to them. She held up her notebook: "See you later?"

Raiyan nodded. Bye

The doctor said Leia's hearing wouldn't get better as she grew up. In fact, there was a chance it could get worse. Leia's family was devastated. They had done so much for her treatment...

Sometimes you can't change, you

can't choose

... but the end result was nothing.

*Sometimes it seems you gain, less than you lose.*

Leia was affected the most. She cried till she could feel her insides dry up, until her tears came no more.

*Can this end? Please...?*

That day at the library, Raiyan knew something was wrong with Leia. She didn't wave at him as he came by. Nor did she hold up her notebook and ask, "How was your day?" Something felt off. Then Leia explained it to him. It took her awhile to write it down. But Raiyan was patient and read through the whole text. It won't ever get better, Raiyan. He stayed silent and looked down at the table.

*What can I do for her?*

Leia's phone began to buzz. She took it out and read the message. She looked at Raiyan and pointed to the door. "I have to go."

Raiyan stood up, but Leia shook her head. No. She gave him a smile. Raiyan stood and watched her go. Maybe I know what I have to do.

The next day, he texted Leia to meet him down at the park after class; she responded:

"Sure"

Raiyan knew this was a throw in the dark. But he wanted to help her somehow. He just hoped this would work. He ended up being a little late to their rendezvous. Jogging up to the large oak tree, he saw Leia already sitting there,

waiting for him while she stared blankly at the grass. God, this completely broke her. He thought.

He smiled and waved to her. She waved back but stopped when she saw what he was carrying. Raiyan sat beside her, dumped his backpack on the ground and took out his guitar. Leia looked at him and then pointed at her ears. I won't be able to hear you.

Raiyan took out his notepad and wrote: "Do you trust me?"

She nodded.

"Then close your eyes and listen."

She hesitated then closed her eyes. Raiyan took a deep breath and started singing.

*I'm gonna pick up the pieces, and build a Lego house.*

*If things go wrong we can knock it down...*

He sang with all his heart, pouring out all of the words as if he meant it.

Leia still yearned to listen. Just when she'd given up, she heard a whisper. Leia almost screamed with joy. And then, like a tidal wave, she heard it all. From the birds chirping in the tree above, to Raiyan singing his heart out, she heard his voice for the first time. It was as if God Himself wanted her to listen to it, to those last words he sang.

*I'll pick you up when you're getting down And out of all these things I've done*

*I will love you better now.*

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