



TABASSUM BINTE TABRIZ

9.25 p.m.

Active about a minute ago

9.26 p.m.

Active Now

9.28 p.m.

Active Now

She stared at the green light. Hoping that she'll receive something in the notifications.

10.00 p.m.

Still nothing.

"You know that I am in love with you, right?" he said, gently caressing her hand.

"No, you are not. You are just saying that because you are jealous," she replied.

"Jealous?!" he was surprised. "Of whom? You know, I really don't count anyone."

"You know what I want. Will you be able to put up with that?" she asked.

He didn't take any time to answer this question.

"Trust me, you are my responsibility now. I'll never hurt you."

She braced herself because no one ever says that unless they are about to hurt you. But she believed anyway. She had been waiting to hear this for five long months.

"I believe you," she replied.

10.50 p.m.

Active Now.

The last message in her inbox was from him:

"I can never put up with anyone like you. You disgust me. You are not my type. You are just a fake—a hypocrite."

"Let's tell our friends about the good news," he said, as they were sitting on the rooftop at Charukola one day.

"Tell them what?" she was more interested in making a flower ring from some kath golap. "About us!" his eyes were sparkling. "No one would take it posi-

tively. I am not risking anything."

This time she looked at him, "I have been through this before. I want this to work. We will tell them later, let a year pass."

"Bu—"

"No buts. I don't want to jinx it." She concentrated on her flower ring again.

11.30 p.m.

She started typing.

"Are you there?"

"Do you know how important you are to me?" he said to her. They were hanging at the central field.

"Well, I come here to watch football with you and you know how much I hate it, so don't even start," she giggled.

She used to think giggling was stupid. But nothing seemed stupid anymore. She was in, with her everything. She loved, like she never loved before.

"Oh please." He smirked. "What kind of a person doesn't like football?!"

"What's the point of seeing some men showing off their hairy legs while fighting over some ball in an open field?!" she looked over her spectacles.

He laughed.

"I like this look of yours."

"What look?" she asked.

"When you are looking over your glasses and your eyes are all big... You look like a cat," he laughed again.

"I simply do not! Now tell me what you were saying!" she nudged him a bit.

"Well," he took her hand, "Do you remember that test we gave after coming back from the last tour? We weren't talking and all... Well, I didn't study at all that time, because you weren't there. You weren't helping me with anything and I didn't even feel like studying. That's how important you are to me."

She smiled. She was thankful for the person who was holding her hands right

now. She had never been so much happier.

"There is a betrayed look in your face, do you know that?" he told her one day.

"Huh." She just sighed.

She was not angry, she was hurt. It wasn't the fact that she expected him to find herself the most prettiest human being or something. She was logical. But she didn't expect this.

"Well God created me this way, so there is nothing I can do about it you know," she joked.

She laughed away her sadness that night. That's what she was good at. That's what she was doing. She didn't want to embarrass herself anymore.

11.31 p.m.

She didn't hit the send button. She swiped the chatbox below. She was scrolling the menu and suddenly opened the message box.

The last time they had talked was ten days ago. Exactly ten days.

"I took my day off for you. Couldn't you just skip the program work? It isn't mandatory for you to go there," she said over the phone. They weren't spending much time together like before. It was the end of their exams, and she finally found time for him.

"What do you know? I asked you to come here. I have to work here, I asked you to sit with me," he replied.

"You won't understand me, ever. I just wanted some time with you, for us. Is this too much to ask? You should really set your priorities straight."

Beep.

He had already cut the phone.

The people on the road were staring and pointing at her. She had never been so embarrassed. There she was crying in the open street. And she didn't feel like hiding it. She didn't want to feel anything

anymore.

"I deserve this. I deserve this for letting my guard down. I should have never been this stupid," she told herself.

It was getting late. But she felt numb. She literally couldn't move. Her legs seemed to have glued themselves with the ground. She was exhausted by everything she was feeling.

"Why aren't you replying to my texts?" The phone vibrated.

"I was asleep," she replied, "And I am not running away if I reply after some time."

"You know how I feel when I get a late reply, you know that," the reply came, "And I am sorry for being rude. Will see you tomorrow. :)"

2.30 a.m.

She finally started typing.

"I didn't go to your profile today. Nor did I see your last seen on WhatsApp. I uninstalled it. I have to recover. I never loved anyone like I loved you. I will never will. I know you are done and that I don't mean anything to you anymore. But it's just that every day I believe a little less and a little less and a little less. And it sucks. What do I do about it?"

Her thumb hovered over the send button for a while but, she finally pressed the backspace instead.

There was no point.

The storm outside grew stronger. And the ruthless cold of the floor ravaged her elbows and knees, as she prostrated herself and sobbed and cried and wept and sobbed yet again.

Tabassum Binte Tabriz is a hopeless wanderer. She is always hungry and irritatingly optimistic about everything. Do not try to contact her anywhere because she avoids human contact as much as possible.