

P O R I

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The rays of sunlight touch the slumber of the busy city announcing the start of a new day. Maliha wakes up with the sound of a busy street and the noise of people bustling around the dorm. She's a 21-year-old university student living her youth away from her family for the first time in her life, in a strange big city by the sea. Growing up in a small village, she always dreamed about a different life, she always believed that she will achieve things in life, that someday she will become a person who will be remembered by everyone. Her determination gets her out of bed every morning.

She gets ready for the day and takes her breakfast in a hurry. The sound of the train's whistle gets her out of her dorm, and she rushes to catch the train to her university. The first familiar face she can make out in the crowd is her friend, Binni, who has saved her a seat. "Hurry, someone might sit here!" she smiles brightly and pats the seat beside her.

"Hey, how is your presentation coming along?" Maliha asks.

Binni's smile turns into a frown as she lets out a sigh, "It's going nowhere, girl! I couldn't write a single line. The professor is being too much. How are we supposed to write about that many books in so little time?"

"I'm having the same problem. Don't worry, though. We still got about two weeks left."

The slow motion of the shuttle train along with the breeze feels nice on her

skin. At the end of the carriage, some students start singing one of those songs that everybody knows, in their loud and untuned voices, using whatever they have as instruments. The back of a seat, a book, or the carriage door.

"Life is wonderful," Maliha thinks to herself.

The day ends with classes, passing time in the tea shop, eating snacks and having fun with her friends. Maliha takes the last train from her university. Just as she says goodbye to all her friends and starts walking down the alleyway towards her dorm, she suddenly hears a small cry. At first she thinks it's a small animal but as she gets nearer to the source, she realises that it's the cry of a small baby. She rushes towards it only to find a newborn baby wrapped up in some dirty blankets, abandoned in a trashcan by the road.

Her head goes blank for a second, she freezes up. What is she going to do? Call the police? Call her friends? Call locals? But the baby might be injured, it might be sick. Without thinking of anything else she holds the baby in her arms, and realises that it's a beautiful baby girl, crying out loud, desperate to live. She makes up her mind to take the baby with her. She calls the first person she can think of – Binni.

"Hello? Binni? I need your help! Please come to the hospital at once. I need you!" That's all Maliha could say.

Binni rushes to the hospital, and keeps calling Maliha. In her head, she's thinking the worst possible scenarios. She runs into the hospital and almost falls down on the

floor when she sees Maliha standing outside the emergency room.

"What were you thinking, calling me like that? I thought something had happened to you!"

"Binni, please calm down. I need you to listen to me," says Maliha, taking Binni with her to sit down in the waiting room.

Maliha goes on to explain what happened after she got off the train. Binni is understandably upset when she hears about it, "How could they do such a thing? How can people be so cruel? What are you going to do now?"

"I just talked to the doctor. He says the baby is safe now, but she's very weak. You know, she's only hours old. I think we should call the police."

Inspector Ikbal comes as soon as he gets the call about the abandoned baby. As he finds out about the situation, he thanks the young girls who saved the baby. But now he has a new problem. He needs to figure out what to do with the baby as she needs someone to care for her, and not to mention the tedious process of announcing that a lost baby has been found. He has to issue official statements, and a bunch of other paperwork that needs to be done before he can take the baby with him. His hesitation gives Maliha an idea, she comes forward and says, "Excuse me sir, if you give me permission I want to care for the baby till you find her parents, or until she gets adopted."

"Are you sure about that?"

"Yes, please let me take care of her."

Surprised at her friend's suggestion, Bin-

ni exclaims, "Are you out of your mind?! How do you plan on keeping that baby?"

"Come on Binni, can't you see she doesn't have anyone by her side? I found her and picked her up, so I should at least do this much," Maliha takes the baby in her arms and holds her tight, "I will take care of her."

Days go by, and the baby who's now called Pori is three months old. Maliha prepares a small gathering for her, because Pori will be adopted by a very kind family that Inspector Ikbal has found. As her news got out, many kind and caring people extended hands of help to ensure Pori gets a better life. Even though it's a happy occasion, Maliha can't stop her tears. Yet, she knows it's all for the little child's future. Binni, Inspector Ikbal, her friends, and all the people who helped her during the last three months have come with many gifts for Pori, and she smiles her bright baby smile at everyone.

Years go by, and on the day of Maliha's graduation, there's a special guest. Pori has come with her parents to congratulate her. Her smile becomes the best gift in the world for Maliha and her friends. After all this time, it doesn't matter to Maliha anymore if she becomes someone who will be remembered by many, it's enough to be remembered by the few who she loves.

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