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The Villain's Wife

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“So, how does it feel to be the wife of a National award winning villain?” the interviewer was looking at Nyra with naked expectation swimming inside the blue orbs of his hunger-stamped eyes. That man desperately needed a little something to ensure this interview doesn't get lost amidst a sea of aspiring others. But, unfortunately, he was relying on an unfit sailor for she never understood the point of interviews. The unnecessary obsession, the unhealthy fixation and the unexplainable interest in the lives of people they are attached to only in the fantasy world. Be it actors, sportspersons or authors. Often to justify the need for inspiration and sometimes to indulge in meaningless and poisonous daydreaming. All these were things that bothered Nyra as much as the overwhelming presence of her husband-Varshit Ahuja- in her life. Almost as much.

Nyra despised such people demonstrating a disturbing curiosity in the lives-personal lives-of perfect strangers as much as she her exceptionally talented husband. A husband who stirred intrigue and wonder wherever he went. A husband she loved just as much as her mind. A husband who she was as much possessive about as her secret musings.

As an artist, Nyra guarded her innermost thoughts as ferociously as a mother her children. If her mind was the womb, the thoughts it housed those children she would never allow to see the light of the day. She felt a deep-rooted pity for all who felt they had what it took to cut the umbilical cord of her indifference and somehow detach her innermost thoughts from the sanctuary of her mind. Her eerily charming and diabolically intriguing mind. A mind she used only to create magnificent stories that intrigued, awed and haunted all having souls as imperfect, as scarred as hers. Scars inflicted by people they once trusted the most. Scars inflicted by tormentors and plunderers disguised as sweet, addictive lovers. Scars that were cursed to never heal for the price of that had to be cowardly forgiveness. Cowardly for it'd have been such an easy



escape from all the hurt and all the betrayal. And anything that came easy was dehumanizing to women like Nyra Deshmukh. Women who were sole creations and not even limited editions. Women who were a class above and a rank higher.

Having a glimpse inside the mind of such women was a rare kind of privilege. The world should be thankful for the legacy she'd created despite having all odds stacked up against her. She was not even allowed the basic right to education for her imbecile of a father had wanted to protect her all at all costs. No woman was safe in this world. And a woman as astoundingly gorgeous as her had!? She needed to be rightfully locked inside a befitting safe-her sweet home. Nyra often chided herself inside the inaccessible realms of her mind for making fun of the sheer stupidity of her poor father. After all, if not for this sheer stupidity how else would've Nandini Deshmukh become Nyra Deshmukh?

Nandini. The bringer of joy; a source of delight. Her grandmother had handpicked this name for her. It fitted her like some custom-made apparel, she used to say. And why won't it!? A thing of beauty is a joy forever. And the much-accomplished collector of rare beauties- Vaishali Deshmukh- had decided on the first meeting itself that her 1-year-old granddaughter surpassed all her 3 daughter-in-laws in beauty, charm and grace. If rumors had any truth to it, she ended up forgiving her weakling of a son for failing at life in general for having birthed her. Such was the power of her dazzling beauty!

The beauty she misinterpreted as a curse for as long as she saw herself in the lights of a victim; fatally wounded by the tyrant destiny. It was this beauty, after all, that kept her from what she'd always imagined as incessantly engaging corridors of schools bustling with a plethora of ideas and discussions. It was this beauty and nothing else that chained her to the four walls of her nauseating home- a home where everyone had built her an altar for her and worshipped her day by night. However, for reasons that did no justice whatsoever to the fire that burned her to gain more-knowledge, wisdom and skills. Nyra wanted to do nothing more than learn and grow as an individual. She wanted to know opinions, to compare and contrast those. She wanted to avail and make use of every piece of information. But it was her wretched beauty that always got in the way. It was this beauty that made it unsafe for her to go out and explore the world; to turn it into an appetizing sweet lemon and squeeze it to its last drop.

She lived in such pernicious illusion as long as her uncle took to finish his studies and re-locate to their ancestral home. Her uncle-with the singular exception of her husband-was the only man in her life who



gave her untiringly and with an unwavering devotion. It won't be wrong to say that Akshit Deshmukh took her under his wing and groomed her to be the confident and brilliant woman the world couldn't get enough of. He introduced to the world of enigmatic Shakespeare and lethal Marlowe. He spent a major chunk of his day explaining Descartes and Spivak to her; giving her the best of both worlds. He singlehandedly converted her prison to her training ground. Because, she remained inside no one raised any objection and, thus, her confinement became her source of enlightenment.

He, in many ways, played the role of the brilliant architect Daedalus in her life. He'd fastened those dazzling wings around her shoulders making it possible for her to scale unfathomable heights. But, unlike her Greek male counterpart, she'd not been so foolish as to cross the infamous lakshman rekha and fall to a mortifying death. Years of imprisonment had taught her how to play big despite playing safe. He was the one who'd reclaimed her and given her an identity she'd grown to love as much as the man himself. He was the name who renamed her Nyra-after his favorite character. A name she'd once pledged the world would know her by. And that's exactly how she paid her gurudaksheena. However, the one thing that had never changed was her strategy of playing-it-safe.

Even marrying the brilliant Varshit Ahuja was a part of the playing-it-safe strategy. She'd shocked everyone by marrying the then struggling 28 year old actor at the peak of her writing career. Even her darling uncle hadn't held back from expressing his surprise at his niece's decision. But it didn't last long. How could it! For, he knew her a little too better than anyone else including her parents. He had to for he had made her what she is today. Akshit knew about his niece's predilection. He knew all those years Nyra hadn't exactly shied away from all those genuine, heart-felt compliments all their family members had unabashedly showered upon her. Her problem had always been the reason, the source of those compliments.

Nyra had always rebelled against being only a pretty face-something she was born with. Something she'd not invested in with her blood, sweat and tears. Unlike her razor-sharp intelligence. Or, her bountiful knowledge. And that was exactly Varshit adored her for. Nyra had chosen over a thousand other suitors for his ability to sink below the sparkling surface and fish out those untouched pearls buried underneath layers of deceiving contours. Varshit admired her for what she was worth. He held her in awe for what she had spent years perfecting. Unlike others, he didn't treat her as a piece of art but, rather, worshipped the artist inside her. And that is exactly what Nyra had craved all her life. That is exactly what sealed the deal between



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the villain and herself.

But the miserable looking interviewer didn't have to know any of that. Not that he wanted to either. Because Varshit's hard-earned success had left her smiling from ear to ear, she decided to throw a tiny, little morsel his way-

“Ah! Only if the bird holding the demon's heart could talk.”

It had to be enough for the greedy, little bugger. Later, the award-winning villain would amuse her in infinite many ways over the sizzling plate of homemade samosas and pakoras he couldn't get enough of.

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