

THE FACADE OF STRENGTH

The ray of sunlight filtered through the dim curtains of her cold room. Enlightening everything it touches, the messed bedsheet, half done homeworks and the old clock which was far forgotten. Ava, a confused young student of the Courtney University was still in her dream land. The waves of light touched her olive skin, turning her into a goddess of gold. She rubbed her eyes, opening the brown orbs to watch the world that felt ordinary... at least that's what she thought.

She made her way to the kitchen to see the unwashed mugs and the lingering smell of yesterday. Washing the dishes wasn't Ava's cup of tea... like most of the young students she too hated the idea of doing chores but she needed her coffee... Turning the stove on... and placing the utensil... She was lost on thoughts, completely out of the world, she was



Brought... back to... world... by... the... ring... of... bell...
for... a... moment... her... heart... raced... "Is that him?"
the... question... clouded... her... ~~heart~~... mind... Her... movements...
were... quiet... almost... too... quiet... Ava... opened... the... door...
to... find... the... 'huge... Red... Rose... Bouquet'... bigger... than... the...
previous... days... with... the... same... note... that... reads...
...surprise... Amore... the... feeling... of... being... watched, stalked
and... still... being... unable... to... do... anything... was... unsettling...
disturbing... even... closing... the... Ava... let... out... a... breath...
that... she... didn't... knew... she... was... holding... Suddenly
she... remembered... something... 'my... coffee'... Running... into...
the... kitchen... she... saw... the... mess... she... Creaked... and...
cursed... under... her... breath... She... silently... wished...
she... were... with... her... parents... right... now...
... Being... born... into... the... richest... family
in... London... Ava... Margaret... Carson... had... everything... she...
wished... except... the... one... thing... -... the... freedom... of... showing
her... true... self... She... was... always... expected... to... be...
the... ~~at~~... perfect... daughter... the... perfect... heir... and... the
perfect... student... From... owning... billions... worth... properties



to luxury collections... she had everything... but also
strangely... ~~anything~~... nothing... to... She was forced to
be a perfect human... but perfect humans aren't
real... and real humans ~~are~~ aren't perfect. She wishes
to be a real human at least one in her life...

...cleaning the mess... Ava walked to
her wardrobe, the designers' clothes, shoes and
bags waited for her to pick them. Dressing up
as a pretty doll and plastering a fake smile
was an art Ava mastered from an young age.
The ^{mansion} Gaint lacked its warmth just like her who
wished she could run into someones arms
and be her true self. Brushing her hair...
she thought to herself 'who is this strange man?'
It's been an year since she moved to France.
Ever since the Christmas eve, there's flowers
on her door step. Every Day. Every Morning the
flowers are getting bigger and bigger just like
her. Feeling of being watched.



A: But.. today.. something.. felt.. different.. the fear....
was.. making.. way.. for.. curiosity, ~~the~~ the sudden....
urge.. to.. find.. the.. mystery.. stalker... who knows
her.. favourite.. colour, .. favourite.. flowers, .. favourite..
~~food~~ ^{food} and .. her.. taste.. in .. ~~com~~ cosmetics... Solving..
the.. mystery.. alone... ~~felt~~ ^{feels} boring.. when.. you....
have... a... group.. of.. amazing.. baddies.. as.. best friend
The.. type.. of.. girls.. every.. man.. wishes.. for.. but..
can't... have.. The.. pampered.. princess.. of.. the.. london..
Business.. families.. Ava's.. circle... consist.. of.. 3.. girls..
Ester.. Martines, Rhea.. collway... and.. Celestine.. Harper..
They.. were.. the... only.. source.. of.. happiness... for..
Ava... in.. her.. rich.. lonely.. world.....

Spilling.. the.. Tea - was.. the.. groups
major.. hobbies... so... when.. Ava... spoke.. about.. her..
unknown.. stalker... Ester.. was ^{confused} ~~scared~~, Rhea.. was..
^{Scared} ~~impressed~~ and.. celestine.. was.. kinda ^{impressed} ~~confused~~. The..

The.. christmas.. eve, The ~~the~~..
Nyx.. club, Rich.. stalker, .. Every.. day... They.. put.. the..



puzzles... together... unable to guess who it is...
The... evening... Ava... felt... strangely... peaceful, walking
the... garden... thinking... about the stalker. She was
suddenly... pulled... into... the... corner. Her... A huge
hand... collapsed... onto... her... mouth... making her
only... able... make... some... muffled... sounds... her
eyes... locked... into... a... black... Iris... which... held... the...
depth... of... infinity... ~~the~~ He... was... 6 ft... tall...
well... build... physich... with... features... sharp... enough
to... cut... and... bleed, the smirk... on... his... face
did... little... to... hide... his... greek... lord... like... face
make... it... even... more... attractive... ~~for a moment~~
~~she~~ ~~forgot~~ But... her... eyes... didn't... wander... it...
stayed... glued... to... his... until... the... moment... of
realisation... hit... her... like... a... ~~back~~ truck... she
was... in... her... stalkers... arm... melting... into... his
manipulative... eyes... instead... of... trying... to... run... away.
'Amore'... ~~the~~ ~~his~~ ~~words~~ his... voice... felt... so...
rough... yet... strangely... soothing... in... her... ears...
'Anon...' her... voice... shaked... as... she... ~~was~~



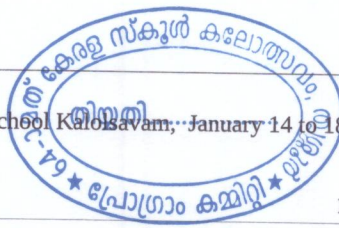
recongised his voice . . . He, who was her only . . .
comfort . . . in . . . the ~~strange~~ cold . . . caged . . . life . of . .
hers . . The . . only . . person . . she . . had . . shown . her . true . .
self . . . before . . she . . was . . forced . . to . . ~~act~~ be . the . ideal .
business . . heir . . The . . only . . source . . of . . happiness . she .
cherished . . Her . . childhood . . bestfriend . - . Aaron . knight
the . . future . . heir . . to . the . . knight . . enterprises . The .
only . . son . . of . . the . . one . . and . . only . . Abraham . knight
the . . business . tycoon

..... 'It was you? All these time?' the .
question . . slipped . her . . tongue . . . as . . her . . mind . . flooded .
with . . emotions . 'who . . else . . knows . you . this . . better?' Aaron
chuckled . as . he . continued . 'I was . . just . . writing . for you .
to . . come . . try . and . find . me .' and . . here . . you . . are' Ava .
..... ~~she~~ just stared . . unable . to . process . the . sudden
rush . . of . . emotions "Surprise . Amore" . . . He . repeated .
the . . same . . line . . he . . used . . to . . write . on . the . notes .
Everyday . . Indeed . . she . . was . . the . . childhood . . friend .
who was . . missing . . for . . a . long . . time . . ~~she~~ had
suddenly appeared before . her claiming . to . be



her . . . secret . . . stalker . . . Shock . . . was . . . visible . . . on her
face . . . ~~ta~~ . . . but her heart . . . beated . . . calmly . . . as if . . .
It . . . had . . . found . . . its . . . safe . . . place . . . again . . .
She . . . hugged . . . him . . . a . . . hug . . . that . . . felt . . . a bit
too . . . personal, . . . a . . . hug . . . that . . . hid . . . years of . . .
longing . . . , . . . a . . . hug . . . that . . . felt . . . like . . . home . . . when
his . . . hands . . . wrapped . . . around . . . her tiny . . . body . . .
She . . . broke down . . . into . . . tears . . . It . . . wasn't . . . tears of . . .
sadness . . . , . . . instead . . . it . . . was . . . tears of . . . hope, ^{trust} ~~faith~~
and . . . comfort . . .

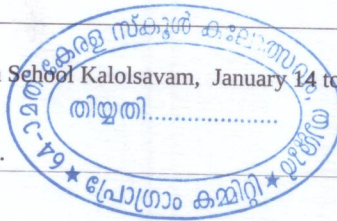
She didn't . . . know . . . how long . . .
she . . . cried . . . , . . . in . . . his . . . arms . . . like . . . a . . . baby . . . The
stalker . . . who . . . she . . . was . . . so . . . curious . . . about . . . was her
only . . . comfort . . . person . . . and . . . that . . . brought . . . her a . . .
strange . . . sense . . . of . . . joy . . . tired . . . on . . . all the . . .
emotional . . . imbalance . . . : . . . She . . . fell . . . a . . . sleep . . .
crying . . . , . . . He . . . picked . . . her . . . walked . . . into
the . . . living . . . room . . . , . . . placed . . . her . . . softly . . .
on . . . to . . . the . . . couch . . . as . . . if . . . she . . . was . . . made
of . . . glass . . . He . . . couldn't . . . help . . . but . . .



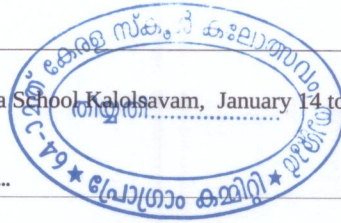
.. admire .. her .. features .. her .. long .. wavy ..
.. brown .. hair .., .. which .. was .. messy .. but .. had ~~it~~ ..
.. ~~own~~ ^a beauty .. of .. its .. own ..: .. the .. long .. lashes .. which ..
.. casted .. ~~strong~~ ^{lovely} shadows .. on .. her .. face .. the ..
.. soft .. cheekbone .. and .. chubby .. cheeks .. were .. a ..
.. deadly .. combination ..: .. the .. full .. lips .. were .. so ..
.. temptable .. that .. it .. was .. irresistible .. to ^{not} ~~plank~~ ..
.. a .. small .. peck ..: .. her .. olive .. skin .. was .. a ..
.. sharp .. contrast .. to .. his .. pale .. ones .. Yet .. they ..
.. felt .. oddly .. meant .. to .. be .. when .. together ..
.. watching .. her .. sleep .. was .. his .. favourite ..
.. view .. not .. just .. now .. from .. the .. very ..
.. beginning .. Every .. time .. Aaron .. left .. flowers ..
.. on .. her .. door .. step .. he .. would .. hide .. and ..
.. watch .. her .. reaction .., .. the .. surprise .., shock ..
.. confusion .. and .. a .. bit .. curiosity .. will .. make ..
.. her .. face .. even .. more .. ~~attractable~~ .. attractive ..

.. After .. a .. few .. moments .. Aaron ..
.. gently .. left .. the .. room .. so .. quiet .. that .. Ava ..

went... wake... up... Hours... passed... ~~and~~ ^{and} the...
house... felt... ~~an~~... a warmth... that... had been
missing... till... now... Ava... tossed on the couch...
turning... to... the other... side... missing the...
~~the~~... presence... of... comfort... Opening... her eyes...
she... felt... nothing... other... than... herself...
all... alone... just... like... before... "Was...
all... that... just... a dream?"... her heart ached...
unknowingly... she... looked... around... desperate
for... any... lingering... signs... of Aaron to be
true... until... her... eyes... caught... the...
note... on... fridge... "don't Overthink, get ready
and... wait... Outside..." Her heart was at
~~ease~~... finally... at... ease... Ava... ran upstairs
excited for
~~for~~... whatever... surprise... Aaron... had...
prepared... choosing... the... attire... she...
found... herself... wanting... to... look pretty
which... was... unusual... because... she...
wasn't... a... girl... who... would... dress up...
for... attention... but... today... something...



Inside her told 'dressed pretty'.....
..... sharp. \$11 there was a
car horn... she thought it was Aaron...
but No... it wasn't... he had ended some
driver... her heart dropped... but she calmed
herself... After half n' hour... of long ride
in the luxury car... They reached a
forest... dark... mysterious... and wild... confused
she ~~turned~~ around... asked the driver where
it was... and he asked her to ~~go~~ walk
in... as she walked a few steps...
inside... the driver left... confused and...
slightly... scared... ~~the~~ Ava walked a few
more steps inside...
The forest was dark...
the ~~that~~ moon light falling in odd...
angles... ~~the~~ thought the \$ space between
the branches of trees... the path was...
not clear... it was loud and tricky...



When Ava reached an ~~en~~ clear space ~~between the~~ inside forest ~~the~~ she stopped suddenly in a snap of fingers ~~there were~~ ^{the} lights ^{got} on, the ~~sur~~ surroundings where filled with red roses, A path made of white roses petals and a ~~board~~ ~~that~~ lights set in ~~with~~ ~~you~~ ~~ma~~ happy Birthday. That's when it hit her its 12:00 clock and its her birthday. Aaron held a huge bouquet of red roses the largest Ava had ever seen. But she was even more surprised to see her friends there. 'how did they knew? :::' this question was inevitable. 'we knew it from the very start' they said in a union before Ava could even proceed to ask. That's when it clicked her that celestine was Aaron's second cousin and they have told her on



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the . . . christmas . . . eve . . . that . . . they . . . would . . .
make . . . her . . . birthday . . . special . . . not . . . like . . . her . .
usual . . . rich . . . birthdays . . . ~~but~~ . . . ~~but~~ . . . but . . . a . . .
memorable . . . One . . .

what's next to it is all



Once home, Ava went to her room. ~~looked~~ watched as the moonlight pour into her room through the same dim ~~curtain~~ curtain thinking

the day could have ended differently: if she had put her fear above her curiosity.

~~with that she closed the curtains~~ she didn't close the curtains that day because she had decided to face the light directly without covers, just like the life she is going to live from ~~tomorrow~~ the ^{very} next day without confusion without hesitation of being the real her. She is dropping the facade of strengths. And with that the Ordinary day left a memorable mark than any other day ever could.