

Chapter 11: Unspoken Fears

Maurya Mansion

After the media's questions were over, Ivaan and Jharna began greeting the guests, exchanging pleasantries and smiles, but their peace was disrupted when Chhaya arrived at the event. She walked in wearing a golden-colored short dress, her eyes sharp with anger as they fixated on Ivaan and Jharna.

Ivaan had Jharna around the waist, an intimate gesture that seemed to hold her possessively. Jharna, visibly uncomfortable, tried to distance herself but was met with Ivaan's firm grip. Chhaya, observing this, felt a surge of fury. This was her territory, and there Jharna stood, taking her place beside Ivaan.

Vihaan and Adhik, noticed the situation unfolding. Adhik, taking a sip of his drink, quipped, "Why she always come to ruin bhai's life?"

Vihaan, his voice filled with the calm confidence he always exuded, replied, "This was bound to happen. But don't worry, bro. Ivaan bhai won't let Chhaya's shadow fall on his life this time."

Adhik, with a mischievous grin, continued, "By the way, where is your Chhaya? I mean, where is your love of life?"

Before Vihaan could respond, a voice cut through their conversation, "Here...!!"

Both men turned to see a beautiful girl standing there, smiling. She was dressed in a navy blue suit, her presence a breath of fresh air amidst the tension. Vihaan's face lit up when he saw her, and he immediately walked toward her, pulling her into a hug. She held him tightly and whispered, "I missed you."

Vihaan pulled back slightly and kissed her forehead, "I missed you too, Saagarika."

Adhik, with a playful smirk, couldn't help but tease, "Yes, yes, alright, alright, when the girlfriend arrives, the brother is forgotten."

Saagarika smiled warmly at Adhik before replying, "It's not like that, Adhik," and hugged him.

Adhik, eager to play the role of the welcoming brother-in-law, grinned, "Come Bhabhi 2, I'll introduce you to Bhabhi 1."

Saagarika, excited, said, "Yes, yes, absolutely! I want to meet Jharna Bhabhi. Vihaan has told me so much about her, and I'm really excited to finally meet her."

Vihaan, smiling at Saagarika's enthusiasm, took her hand and led her towards Ivaan and Jharna. As they walked over, Adhik muttered under his breath, "Both brothers have drifted apart now, but it's okay... as long as their wives are nice, I guess, can live with it."

Vihaan introduced Saagarika with pride, "Saagarika, this is Jharna, Ivaan bhai's wife and the eldest daughter-in-law of this house. And Jharna, this is Saagarika, my girlfriend."

Saagarika greeted Jharna with a bright smile, "Nice to meet you, Bhabhi. You look very beautiful."

Jharna smiled back, her gaze warm yet a bit guarded. "Nice to meet you too. I didn't expect Vihaan to be such a surprise package!"

Vihaan blushed, scratching his head, while Saagarika playfully blinked her eyes. The lighthearted banter continued until Adhik chimed in, "Oh bhabhi, everyone in this house is like this, except me. I'm the only decent one."

Vihaan, clearly amused, pulled his ear, "Decent, huh...!!!"

The laughter and friendly teasing filled the air, but Ivaan, standing near the drinks stall, observed it all quietly. He shook his head slightly, taking a sip of his drink to drown out the noise, but just as he was about to turn away, he felt a hand land on his shoulder.

Ivaan stiffened, his gaze flicking to the hand before rising to meet Chhaya's eyes. She was smiling, but there was an undeniable tension in her expression. When Ivaan's eyes narrowed with anger, Chhaya quickly

withdrew her hand, but not before her lips whispered, "Do you love her?" Ivaan, understanding instantly that she was referring to Jharna, spun around to face her. "Of course, I love her," he said, his voice steady but cold. "She's my wife, she's beautiful, and most importantly, she isn't deceitful like you."

Chhaya's face flushed with jealousy, but she tried to hold herself together. She quickly retrieved her phone, swiping through it with trembling fingers. "Ivaan," she said softly, almost pleading, "I was just looking at my phone gallery yesterday... look what I found." She turned the screen toward him, showing photos of them from their past.

Ivaan looked at the pictures, his expression hardening. Chhaya's eyes glistened with unshed tears as she continued, "True love doesn't end so easily. I know I made mistakes, but that doesn't mean I don't love you. I really love you, Ivaan. Please... please don't do this to me."

A single tear rolled down her cheek, but Ivaan remained stoic. At this moment, Jharna's gaze fell on them. As Ivaan absentmindedly touched Chhaya's tear-streaked face, she smiled inwardly, thinking that perhaps there was still a chance for them. But Jharna, witnessing this, immediately turned away, her emotions a mix of hurt and confusion.

Jharna's eyes met Abhimaan's, who had been observing from a distance, and her discomfort grew. She quickly excused herself, muttering, "I'll go see Ansh." With that, she walked away, leaving Ivaan and Chhaya behind.

Ivaan, not missing a beat, spoke harshly to Chhaya, "I think even crocodile tears would be more genuine than this. By the way, who invited you here?" Chhaya, stunned by the sharpness in his tone, hesitated. "Uh, I... I came here on my own."

Ivaan's words dripped with sarcasm. "You could've at least faked an invitation card, or maybe you couldn't afford one."

The bite in his words stung, and Chhaya, unable to say anything more, turned to leave, her face flushed with anger and humiliation. Ivaan,

without a second glance, turned to walk away.

Meanwhile, Jharna, still processing everything, stood in the corner when she heard someone behind her. A voice said, "Thank you." She turned to find Abhimaan standing there, his gaze thoughtful.

"Thank you?" Jharna asked, puzzled.

Abhimaan gave her a small smile. "Yes, thank you. Because of you, there's electricity in my company now, and everything is running smoothly."

Jharna raised an eyebrow, her voice tinged with mild sarcasm, "Are you mocking me? I did what I thought was right to bring you here, and everyone is so happy about your presence, especially maa."

Abhimaan smiled lightly, his eyes searching hers. "But you're not happy about someone's presence."

The words hit Jharna harder than she expected. She grabbed a glass of water, taking a long sip to calm herself, then replied nonchalantly, "There's nothing like that. I just came here to drink water."

But before she could leave, Abhimaan's voice stopped her. "He might be stubborn, arrogant, and rude, but he's not deceitful. That girl was his past, and now he's not connected to her. So don't burn yourself with jealousy."

Abhimaan smiled faintly, turning away to leave, but his words lingered in the air.

Jharna stood there for a moment, reflecting on his words. Jealous? She whispered to herself. Why should I be jealous? Whether that criminal is with one girl or ten, it doesn't matter to me. I'm only here for my Ansh.

With a shake of her head, she moved to leave but collided with Ivaan, who had been following her. Their eyes locked, and Jharna felt the weight of their earlier conversation. Without a word, she started to walk away, but Ivaan, noticing Chhaya's gaze upon them, suddenly pulled her back.

Startled, Jharna stumbled into his arms. Ivaan, brushing her hair aside with tenderness, looked into her eyes. "Baby, have you eaten?"

Jharna was surprised at his affectionate gesture. She blinked her big eyes

and just shook her head in response.

Ivaan smiled, the warmth in his eyes evident. "I knew it. You never take care of yourself. Come on."

He gently led her to the catering area, where he seated her and began feeding her, his hands full of care and affection. Jharna, still taken aback, asked with a nervous, "Are you drunk?"

Ivaan, without skipping a beat, grinned. "Yes, intoxicated by your love."

Meanwhile, Chhaya, watching from a distance, seethed with anger, her face turning red. But she couldn't bear to watch anymore and stomped away in fury.

Ivaan, seeing Chhaya leave, paused in his feeding, the spoon still lingering in Jharna's mouth. He smirked, "Am I supposed to feed you everything? Eat on your own. You're not a child."

With that, Ivaan left, engrossed in his phone. Jharna, sitting in astonishment, exclaimed to herself, "This man is crazy! When did I ask him to feed me? "

With an irritated huff, she finally started eating.

End of Function.

Abhimaan, back in his room, sat working on his laptop when Shikha entered, smiling softly.

"Why are you smiling for no reason?" Abhimaan teased.

Shikha, her voice gentle, replied, "You came to the function today because Jharna called you. I was happy to see you there—it means you've accepted her as your daughter-in-law."

Abhimaan lay on the bed, thinking about Jharna. He thought, "For the first time in so many years, someone called me papa with so much affection. How can I not listen to her?" As he thought, a tear rolled down his cheek, but he quickly wiped it away.

The next day, Ivaan was in his office when Amaan entered and placed a file on his desk.

“Boss, we’ve found nothing. Jharna ma’am has no connections whatsoever with your rivals,” he informed.

Ivaan picked up the file and began flipping through the pages.

Amaan added, “Despite countless efforts, there’s nothing about her past either. It’s like she erased it completely.”

Just then, a furious voice echoed from the doorway.

“And what exactly do you want to know about Jharna ma’am’s past?”

Both men turned toward the voice to see Jharna standing there, fire blazing in her eyes.

She stormed in, grabbed Ivaan by the collar, and shouted, “What do you want from me? Why are you so desperate to dig into my past? Do you want to know who Miransh’s father is? Who was in my life before you? Why? What difference does it make to you? Did I ever question you about that girl? No, right? Then why this obsession with my past?”

Ivaan stood silent, stunned by the rage in her voice. Amaan was shocked to see Ivaan, Jharna was holding his collar, and he remained silent.

“You didn’t marry me out of love,” Jharna continued, “You forced this marriage on me when I was helpless. You already knew about Miransh’s father. If it bothered you so much, why did you marry me at all? And now suddenly you want to play detective?”

She shoved his collar away and pointed a sharp finger at him.

“Let me make this clear—I’m in this marriage only for my son. You and I share nothing. Don’t interfere in my life, and I won’t interfere in yours.”

With that, she turned and stormed out.

Ivaan had seen Jharna angry before, but today was different. This time, her anger carried fear. A deep-rooted fear of her past resurfacing—something she never wanted to face again. And somewhere, deep down, Ivaan felt he was the one dragging those buried memories back into her

life.

Later...

Jharna was walking on the road, tears streaming down her cheeks.

Flashback

Abhimaan was in his room, talking to someone on the phone, when Jharna came in with a cup of coffee for him. Seeing that he was busy, Jharna quietly stood there without disturbing him. As soon as Abhimaan noticed her, he said softly into the phone, "I'll call you later," and ended the call. She walked in and handed him the coffee.

"Have you started working as a chef here?" he asked sarcastically.

Jharna smiled slightly. "No. But since you missed my first cooking ritual and haven't tasted anything I've made, I thought I'd start with coffee."

Though Abhimaan's heart had started to soften, he masked it behind a stern tone.

"Just leave it. I'm busy."

She quickly replied, "Then tell me what you're working on. I'll handle it while you enjoy your coffee."

Frustrated, he snapped, "Why don't you listen? You're no different from Ivaan."

"Please," Jharna pleaded, "Don't compare me to that arrogant man. I'm far better than him. I can help you, I promise. Just have your coffee."

Saying that, she took his phone from him.

Abhimaan stared at her, stunned. She picked up his laptop but found it dead.

"Looks like the battery's drained. No worries, I'll email it from Ivaan's laptop. You just enjoy your coffee."

And she walked out.

Abhimaan blinked in disbelief. "She just... ordered me?" he muttered, glancing at the cup in his hand.

Meanwhile, Jharna went to her room and opened Ivaan's laptop to send

the email. But something caught her attention—emails from Amaan, containing details... about her. Her expression changed.

Back to Present

Back on the road, Jharna whispered to herself, “If he ever finds out about her... if he discovers something about Miransh... If he uncovers my past... No. I can’t let that happen. Miransh should never know the truth.”

Engrossed in her thoughts, she didn’t notice a black van slowly trailing her. It stopped beside her, and two masked men jumped out.

Before she could react, one struck her from behind. Everything went black as they dragged her into the van.

At the Office

Ivaan sat in his cabin, thoughts swirling around his mind. Amaan had been watching him silently.

“I messed up,” Ivaan finally muttered. “There’s clearly something in her past she doesn’t want to face. And I brought it all back... I married her out of pressure, emotionally blackmailed her into it. I didn’t even trust her.”

Amaan stepped forward.

“Boss, if you feel guilty... apologize. You still have time.”

Ivaan sighed. “Stop the investigation. I don’t want to dig any deeper. I know enough already.”

Amaan nodded quietly.

Just then, a message buzzed on Ivaan’s phone. Lost in regret, he ignored it at first.

Later that night at Maurya Mansion

Everyone was on edge. Restless. Pacing.

“Where’s Momma?” Miransh asked Shikha with wide, anxious eyes. “She never stays away from me this long. Is she okay?”

Shikha placed a comforting hand on his head. “She’s perfectly fine,

sweetheart. She must be with Ivaan. Now go finish your homework. They'll be home soon."

After Miransh left, Shikha turned to Abhimaan, worried.

"Jharna is never careless. Something's wrong. Ivaan isn't answering either. Please do something."

"I'll call Amaan," Vihaan said, pulling out his phone and putting it on speaker.

Amaan picked up and handed the phone to Ivaan.

"Bro," Vihaan said, "Where's Jharna?"

"What do you mean 'where'?" Ivaan asked, confused. "She must be home by now."

Abhimaan snatched the phone.

"Don't lie. I saw her come to your place. She hasn't been home since. Where is she?"

"She left from here," Ivaan replied, taken aback. "I assumed she went home."

"You didn't even check?" Abhimaan shouted. "You constantly remind me of my failures, yet you couldn't even protect your wife."

Ivaan's temper flared.

"My wife is no damsel in distress. Wherever she is, she'll be fine. And let me tell you something—no one can lay a finger on her."

He ended the call with fury.

Finally, he checked the earlier message.

Mr. Ivaan Maurya, the woman you love is with us now. So tell us—should we call an ambulance or prepare her funeral?

His jaw clenched. His grip on the phone tightened.

He growled, "Prepare funeral. Because whoever dared to touch her won't live long enough to regret it."

He gave Amaan a sharp nod.

Amaan didn't waste a second—he was already on his way.

Sitara's Note

Sometimes, the loudest battles are the ones we never speak of—the questions left unasked, the past we fear will resurface, and the pain we carry silently.

In this chapter, each character stands at a crossroad between what they feel and what they show. Jharna's strength, Ivaan's guilt, Chhaya's desperation, and Abhimaan's quiet wisdom... all whisper stories of unspoken fears.

And just when the heart begins to warm, fate strikes without warning.

What do you think—is the past truly behind us, or is it only waiting to be found?

Thank you for turning these pages with your heart open.

With heart,

— Sitara Chandria