

Chapter 3: Threads Of Chaos

All the guests had arrived, and the grand event was about to commence. This prestigious gathering was hosted by Maurya Corporation, one of the world's leading conglomerates, built single-handedly by Abhimaan Maurya—a man whose sheer determination and vision had shaped an empire. Though he was a man in the prime of his life, Abhimaan carried himself with a presence that defied time. His face bore only subtle traces of age, and his sharp gaze commanded respect.

As he entered the venue, all the lights turned towards him. Conversations ceased, and every eye in the hall shifted to the man of the hour.

Yet, Abhimaan's attention was locked on just one person.

With a slow, deliberate stride, he approached him, his lips curling into a sarcastic smile.

"Ivaan Maurya! At my party? Well, isn't this a surprise. Thank goodness you still remember that you have a father."

Standing tall, hands buried in his pockets, Ivaan met his father's gaze with a steely expression.

"Father?" He let out a cold chuckle. "If you don't understand the meaning of a word, you shouldn't use it. And for the record, I'm here only for my mother. I have no business with anyone else."

Abhimaan's jaw clenched at his son's defiance, but he swiftly masked his anger with a composed smile. Without another word, he turned to greet the other guests as the party officially commenced.

At the drinks counter, Ivaan poured himself a glass of whiskey, his sharp eyes never leaving his father. He lifted the glass to his lips, but before he could take another sip, a delicate hand snatched it away.

His eyes narrowed as he turned to see a woman standing before him.

"Alcohol is harmful to health," she said gently.

Ivaan scoffed, running a hand through his hair. "Maa... I've been swallowing poison my entire life. Do you really think a little whiskey will make a difference?"

Shikha's gaze drifted toward Abhimaan, her eyes glistening with unshed tears. Yet, she forced a smile and whispered, "A wife finds happiness in her husband's success."

With that, she turned and walked away.

Ivaan watched her retreating figure, emotions swirling within him.

Just then, Adhik and Vihaan approached, each holding plates piled with pastries and cookies.

Adhik, munching enthusiastically, grinned. "These are amazing! Absolutely delicious."

Vihaan took a bite of a cookie and nodded. "Seriously, bro, these are next level. You should try them."

Ivaan raised a brow. "Is this the only place you found to eat?"

Adhik shrugged. "There's plenty of places here, but we found you there. And you know we can't live without you."

Vihaan grinned. "Exactly! That's why we are there with –"

Both boys smirked as they said in unison, "Special recipe by Ms Jharna Kashyap."

Ivaan rolled his eyes in irritation. "Will you both stop mentioning her name?"

Just then, a firm yet playful voice interrupted.

"Whose name?"

They turned to see Deepa, Vihaan's mother and Ivaan's and Adhik's bua (aunt), standing nearby with a teasing smile.

Adhik quickly handed her a pastry. "Bua ji, try this and tell us how it is."

Deepa took a bite and hummed in approval. "Mmm, good."

Vihaan smirked. "See, Ivaan bro? Even Mom loves it. Right Adhik?"

Adhik grinned. "Told you!"

Deepa looked between them, confused. "Wait... who are you both talking about?"

The boys exchanged mischievous glances before answering together, "The pastry!"

They high-fived each other, leaving Deepa even more puzzled, while Ivaan tried to decipher what was really going on.

As Ivaan turned to leave, he accidentally collided with someone. He instinctively went to apologize—until his gaze landed on the person's face. His mood soured instantly.

Not just his, but Adhik, Vihaan, and even Deepa's expressions darkened as well.

Deepa scowled at the woman. "What is this serpent doing here?"

Vihaan clenched his jaw. "She's here to spread her poison, of course."

The woman was Chhaya Sehgal. Dressed in a sleek black midi dress with a plunging neckline, high heels, heavy makeup, and cascading hair, she exuded undeniable beauty.

Smiling sweetly, she looked at Ivaan, but he turned away, intent on ignoring her.

Just as he moved to walk past, she grabbed his hand.

Ivaan's eyes darkened as they fell on the hand gripping him.

His voice was low and lethal. "If you want to keep that hand attached to your body, let go."

Chhaya's face paled at the deadly warning. She quickly withdrew her hand. But she wasn't done.

"You claim you loved me once, yet you speak to me like this. I guess that means you never really loved me. It was all just a lie, wasn't it?"

Ivaan turned back, his eyes cold as ice. "I did care for you once... which is why you're still breathing today." His voice was eerily calm. "But those who betray me? I burn them alive. The past is dead, Chhaya. Before you make another move, think carefully—because one wrong step could be your last."

Chhaya shuddered at the menace in his tone, realizing just how dangerous the man before her had become.

Jharna was muttering to herself, furiously wiping at her dupatta.

"I swear, today is cursed! First, that car guy spills something on me, then that girl drenches me in juice. What next?!"

Still grumbling, she turned—only to crash into someone, losing her balance. She fell, landed right on top of the man. "Ahh!!! Who did I even see this morning?!"

Peering through her dupatta, she struggled to see who it was. Then, realizing, her eyes widened in shock.

"YOU...!!!"

Ivaan, equally irritated, groaned. "What is your problem? Have you taken an oath to make my life miserable?"

Jharna scowled. "Trust me, I have zero interest in seeing your face either!"

Meanwhile, Miransh arrived at that place, searching for Jharna.

Jharna scrambled to her feet and stormed off, but before she could take another step, Ivaan's sharp gaze caught something.

Above them, a massive chandelier trembled, about to collapse.

His expression turned to alarm.

"Jharna, STOP!"

But she didn't hear him.

At that moment, a small voice echoed through the hall.

"Momma....!!!"

Jharna froze. "Ansh...?"

Before she could react, the chandelier came crashing down—only for Ivaan to pull her into his arms, shielding her from the falling wreckage.

Gasps filled the room as silence fell.

Jharna, still dazed, looked up at Ivaan.

And in that moment, everything changed.

Sitara's Note

Sometimes chaos doesn't just shake a room—it tests hearts, rewrites equations, and brings two worlds crashing into each other. Writing this chapter was like threading tension through every line—each moment building towards that one life-altering second beneath the chandelier.

This wasn't just a twist of fate. It was a moment of reckoning. Ivaan, with all his rage and restraint.

Jharna, with all her fire and pride.

And yet, when danger came, instinct spoke louder than ego.

It's in these unscripted moments where stories truly begin to unfold.

Thank you, truly, for being a part of this journey—turning every page, smiling at the drama, and holding your breath at the falls. Let me know what you felt when that chandelier dropped. Did your heart skip too?

We're only getting started.

With love and more chaos to come,

– Sitara Chandria