

Chapter 5: The Midnight Chase

When Ivaan returned to the villa, he found everyone gathered in the hall, their expressions clouded with concern. Sensing the tense atmosphere, he stepped forward and asked, “What’s wrong? Why do you all look so troubled?”

Before anyone could respond, a voice laced with disdain cut through the silence—Abhimaan’s.

"It’s obvious. Anyone with a son like yours would be worried."

Ivaan exhaled deeply, his gaze meeting Abhimaan’s. As Abhimaan approached him, he continued, “There was a huge commotion at the event, and you slipped away without a word. I was left to handle everything alone. What’s the point of having you around?”

Ivaan’s voice was steady but firm. “My mother raised me alone because you were too busy running your so-called business. When you failed to fulfill your duty as a father, what exactly do you expect from me?”

Abhimaan gritted his teeth in anger. “Don’t forget, the luxurious life you’re enjoying today is because of that so-called business. And the company you’re soaring with? Even my money is invested in it.”

Ivaan chuckled, the sound laced with mockery. “Seriously? Do you truly believe, Mr. Abhimaan Maurya, that my company, Vertigo, stands on your financial support? Do you even know its annual turnover?”

Abhimaan narrowed his eyes, watching Ivaan with suspicion. Ivaan sank onto the sofa, one leg casually crossed over the other, and smirked.

“My company’s yearly turnover is equivalent to five years of yours. And yet, you think Vertigo runs on your money?”

Abhimaan’s pride took a hit, but he refused to back down. “Even if I have no connection with your company, don’t forget—you exist in this world because of me.”

A bitter smile touched Ivaan’s lips. “Even animals can reproduce, but nurturing a child, raising them, standing by them—that requires something else. Tell me, have you ever done that?”

For the first time, Abhimaan fell silent. He knew, deep down, that he had played no part in his children's upbringing.

Ivaan stood up, his voice unwavering. "When I needed you the most, you weren't there. So now, don't expect anything from me." With that, he walked away, leaving the hall in stunned silence.

The Next Morning – At the Apartment

Jharna was busy getting Miransh ready—it was his first day at a new school. As she fixed his hair, Malini entered the room and announced, "Breakfast is ready."

Jharna smiled, adjusting Miransh's uniform. "And Ansh too," she added with warmth.

After a cheerful breakfast together, Jharna took Miransh to school.

At the School

As they reached the entrance, Jharna knelt before Miransh and brushed his hair back. "I know my little champ is strong, but still, take care of yourself, alright? You know you're Momma's whole world, don't you?"

Miransh nodded enthusiastically. "Yes, Momma! Can I go now?"

Jharna pressed a kiss to his forehead before letting him go. In return, Miransh kissed her cheek and ran inside. She watched him disappear into the crowd of students before turning to leave.

As Miransh wandered through the corridors, searching for his classroom, he accidentally bumped into someone. Looking up, his face instantly lit up with excitement.

"Superhero!" he exclaimed, throwing his arms around the man.

Ivaan looked down, startled. Recognizing the little boy, a smile tugged at his lips. He lifted Miransh into his arms. "Hey, champ! You study here?"

Miransh beamed. "Yes, superhero! Today's my first day! But what are you doing here?"

Ivaan chuckled. "I'm the trustee of this school."

Miransh's eyes widened. "Oh! That means you know where my classroom is? I've been searching for it."

Ivaan took Miransh's ID card and nodded. "Of course I do. Let's go."

When they arrived at the classroom, the students and teacher stood in acknowledgment of Ivaan's presence. He set Miransh down and turned to the teacher. "This is a new student."

The teacher smiled. "Miransh, yes, I know. But, sir, how do you know him?"

Before Ivaan could answer, Miransh piped up, "He's my superhero! He saved my Momma from a swing!"

The teacher looked puzzled at the statement. Ivaan merely smiled and said, "He's special to me. Please take good care of him."

The teacher nodded, and with one last affectionate pat on Miransh's head, Ivaan left the room.

Two men sat across from each other on a luxurious sofa, surrounded by several onlookers. The dim lighting concealed their faces, but one detail stood out—the bracelets on their wrists.

One bracelet bore the emblem of an eagle, while the other displayed the insignia of a fox. These were their marks of identity.

The man with the fox bracelet smirked. "I have to admit, Eagle Eye's management is flawless. I don't even need a mask here. I hope Eagle Eye maintains diamonds the same level of precision."

The other man—Eagle Eye—replied coolly, "Eagle Eye's work is always perfect, ForeFox. This time will be no different."

ForeFox leaned forward slightly. "Good. Then it's your responsibility to ensure the diamonds reach the Maldives. My man will meet you on the highway at 10 PM. If the diamonds are in his hands, great. If not..." He placed a small red bag on the table.

Eagle Eye picked up the bag and smirked. “I’m well aware of the consequences. But don’t worry, you won’t get a chance to act.”

They shook hands, sealing the deal. As ForeFox left, room lights brightened, Eagle Eye’s face was revealed—none other than Ivaan.

Ivaan gazed at the bag, a knowing smile playing on his lips. “People think they’re experts in this game. But there’s a fine line between being an expert and merely believing you are one.”

A man approached him. “Boss, I’ll ensure the diamonds are delivered safely.”

Ivaan shook his head. “No, Amaan. I’ll handle this personally. I want to play with this new player myself.”

Amaan nodded. “As you wish, Boss.”

10 PM – On the Highway

Jharna was driving toward the highway, frustration evident on her face. She muttered to herself, "Ugh! I can’t find a stationery shop anywhere! Ansh always remembers things at the last minute. Where on earth am I supposed to find a shop at this hour?"

Meanwhile, Ivaan sat inside a car, dressed entirely in black. The headlights remained off as he answered a call via Bluetooth. His voice was calm yet sharp.

"What’s the update, Amaan?" he asked.

On the other end, Amaan responded, "Boss, we’ve got intel. One of their men is on the move to steal the diamonds."

A smirk played on Ivaan’s lips. "Perfect. We’re all set for the diamonds to be ‘stolen’ then." He ended the call, then reached for a black mask, pulling it over his face.

Jharna parked her car and hurried toward a stationery shop—coincidentally, right in front of Ivaan’s vehicle. The night’s darkness veiled their presence from each other.

"Wait! Wait! Wait!" Jharna called out, rushing towards the shopkeeper just as he was about to shut the store.

The shopkeeper paused, raising an eyebrow.

Breathless, Jharna pleaded, "Bhaiya, please! I need a colouring book and some colours."

The shopkeeper hesitated. "But I was just closing up—"

"Please!" she cut him off, desperation lacing her voice. "I've been searching everywhere. I need it for my son's school tomorrow. Just this once?"

The shopkeeper sighed before nodding. "Alright."

Relieved, Jharna quickly grabbed the items, paid him, and turned to leave.

Just then, Ivaan stepped out of his car, his face concealed behind the mask. A bag of diamonds hung from his hand.

Fate had an interesting plan that night.

As Jharna hurried away, Ivaan turned—only to collide directly into her.

The impact sent both their belongings tumbling to the ground—the diamonds spilling from Ivaan's bag and Jharna's colouring book landing beside them.

Ivaan's body tensed. He hadn't expected this. His mind raced. A girl? Here? At this hour?

Before he could react further, Jharna crouched down, quickly gathering her things. But just as she reached for the fallen diamonds, Ivaan snatched them back in haste.

Jharna's sharp gaze met his masked face.

Suspicious, she questioned, "Who are you? And what's in that bag?"

Ivaan remained silent.

Jharna narrowed her eyes. "Hey! I'm talking to you!"

When he still didn't respond, she lunged for the bag. But Ivaan was quicker. He grabbed her wrist, his grip firm.

His mind screamed, This could ruin my entire plan. I need to leave. Now.

With one swift motion, he yanked the bag free from Jharna's grasp and bolted.

"Hey, stop!" Jharna shouted, immediately chasing after him.

Ivaan sprinted through the dimly lit streets, but Jharna was just as fast, keeping up with him effortlessly.

Ivaan gritted his teeth. Why is she chasing me like this? he muttered under his breath. Doesn't she get tired?

Jharna, unfazed, smirked to herself. "Run as far as you can — you have no idea whose daughter I am. Handling people like you is second nature to me, you 'kaale chor'."

With a mischievous glint in her eyes, she picked up a wooden stick lying nearby and hurled it at Ivaan's legs.

The stick hit its mark.

Ivaan stumbled, losing his balance before crashing onto the ground.

Jharna smirked victoriously and ran toward him, tried to snatch the diamonds.

Amaan and his men had been observing everything from a distance.

Through Bluetooth, Amaan's voice crackled into Ivaan's ear, "Boss, this girl could be a problem. Should we take her down?"

At Amaan's suggestion, Ivaan's eyes darkened.

"No!" he snapped. "Don't you dare."

The sharp authority in his voice made Jharna pause for a brief second.

I've heard this voice before... she thought, her brows furrowing.

"Who are you?" she demanded.

Determined, she lunged forward, her fingers reaching for his mask.

Ivaan reacted instantly, grabbing her wrist to stop her. But Jharna was relentless. As she struggled against his grip, her nails inadvertently scraped his hand, leaving faint red marks behind.

Ivaan clenched his jaw. Jangli billi. (Wildcat.)

Jharna's gaze remained fixed on him, suspicion dancing in her eyes.
Would she uncover the truth about Ivaan?

Sitara's Note

Some chapters aren't written with ink—they're carved with adrenaline, sharp glances, and footsteps echoing through midnight silence.

This chapter was pure chaos, and I loved every second of writing it. A collision of two worlds again—but this time under the stars, with stolen diamonds, hidden identities, and a woman who refused to back down.

Because when Jharna runs... she doesn't run away—she runs toward the storm.

And Ivaan? Well, even behind a mask, his soul was visible. Fierce. Unshaken. But the cracks are forming, aren't they?

If your heart raced during the chase or if you smiled when she called him kaale chor—that's the kind of magic I live for as a writer.

Tell me in the comments—did this feel like a thriller to you or a fiery romance in disguise?

And most importantly... what do you think will happen when the mask finally comes off?

Always writing for your hearts,

– Sitara Chandria