

Chapter 6: Marriage Proposal

Jharna persistently tried to remove Ivaan's mask, but her efforts were in vain. Frustration flickered in Ivaan's eyes as he struggled to find a way to escape from her grasp.

Then, an idea struck him. With a swift, forceful tug, he slid Jharna's suit off her shoulders, causing the fabric to tear slightly, revealing a delicate mole on her fair chest.

For a fleeting moment, Ivaan was captivated. The tiny mark stood out beautifully against her smooth skin, and he found himself unable to look away. But just as he was lost in admiration, Jharna suddenly realized what had happened. A sharp gasp escaped her lips as she instinctively stepped back.

The abrupt movement snapped Ivaan back to reality. Jharna quickly covered herself with her dupatta, but when she looked up, Ivaan was gone—vanished without a trace.

She stood there, scanning her surroundings, but there was no sign of him. "I know I've heard his voice somewhere before," she thought, her brows furrowed in deep contemplation.

Ivaan stood shirtless in front of the bathroom mirror when his phone rang. He answered via Bluetooth.

On the other end, Amaan's voice came through, "Boss, the diamonds have been delivered to their destination."

"Good," Ivaan replied before ending the call.

As he ran a hand through his hair, his gaze fell on the fresh scratch marks on his arm. His mind drifted back to the mole on Jharna's chest, and a faint, amused smile curled on his lips.

But as the thought lingered, he suddenly shook his head, scolding himself. What's wrong with me? I've never been this distracted by a woman—not even Chhaya. But this girl...

"Stop it, Ivaan."

The Next Day

As Jharna exited the police station, she muttered to herself, “I’ve informed the police about everything that happened last night. Hopefully, they’ll catch that thief soon.”

Yet, despite her confidence, a question nagged at her. Why does his voice sound so familiar? I know I’ve heard it before, but I just can’t remember where.

Lost in thought, she kept walking until her phone rang. She answered the call, listened for a moment, then said, “Okay, I’m coming.”

Vertigo Office

Ivaan was engrossed in his work when a knock on the door made him look up.

“Come in,” he said.

Amaan entered, his expression serious. “Boss, the girl from last night—she informed the police about the diamonds.”

Ivaan’s eyes darkened. “What?”

“Yes, but fortunately, the officer she reported to was one of ours, so he handled everything.”

Ivaan leaned back in his chair, deep in thought. Jharna... why is she getting so involved in all this?

Amaan hesitated before adding, “Boss, because of that girl, our entire plan was almost ruined. And this isn’t the first time she’s interfered. First, she attacked by throwing dirty water on you, then the chandelier incident, and now this.”

Ivaan narrowed his eyes. “What are you trying to say?”

Amaan stepped closer. “What if she’s connected to ForeFoxes?”

A heavy silence settled between them.

“We knew ForeFoxes would attempt to steal the diamonds,” Amaan continued, “but instead, it was that girl who tried. There’s a strong possibility she’s linked to them.”

Ivaan's jaw tightened as he considered the possibility. Could she really be working with them? But if she is, why don't I sense it?

Ivaan prided himself on reading people at a glance, yet Jharna remained a mystery. If he wanted answers, he needed to meet someone.

Park – Afternoon

Ivaan sat on a park bench beside a young boy dressed in a school uniform. Miransh glanced up at him with curious eyes.

“So, Superhero,” Miransh grinned, “why did you make me skip class today?”

Ivaan chuckled, handing him a chocolate. “Because I wanted to spend time with my champ.”

Miransh's face lit up as he took the chocolate. “I love spending time with you too. It feels like... I'm with my dad.”

Ivaan's smile faltered. He turned to Miransh, studying his expression.

Realizing what he had just said, Miransh quickly tried to cover it up. “No, nothing.”

But Ivaan wasn't convinced. “You miss him, don't you?”

Miransh hesitated, then lowered his head in silence. That was all the answer Ivaan needed.

Outside the School

Jharna stood near the gate, waiting for Miransh, when her eyes landed on Ivaan carrying him out of the school. Her brows knitted in confusion.

As he approached, she crossed her arms. “Mr. Black Beast! what are you doing here? And why are you with my Ansh?”

Ivaan raised an eyebrow. “What did you just call me?”

Jharna smirked. “If you roam around in a black car with a ghostly attitude then people will call you a black beast only.”

Miransh giggled at her words.

Ivaan put Miransh down and faced her. “My name is Ivaan.. Ivaan Maurya.

I am trustee of this school, so I don't need your permission to be here.”
Jharna rolled her eyes. “I don't care if you're the Prime Minister. I just want to know why you're with my son.”

Before Ivaan could respond, Miransh tugged on Jharna's hand. “Momma, I'm hungry. Let's go home.”

Jharna nodded. “Yes, betu, let's go.”

As she turned to leave, her bracelet slipped off and fell to the ground.

Ivaan picked it up, running his fingers over the delicate piece of jewellery. His gaze darkened as he murmured, If you're really connected to ForeFoxes, my darling, you have no idea what's coming next.

At Night – Maurya Villa

Ivaan sat in his room, his eyes scanning the files on his laptop. Frustration simmered within him as he called Amaan.

“What is this, Amaan? This is information from five years ago—after Miransh was born. But where was Jharna before that? Who is Miransh's father? There's nothing about her past!”

Amaan sighed. “Boss, I tried everything, but there's no trace of her before that. It's like she didn't even exist.”

Ivaan clenched his jaw. “That's impossible.”

But as he disconnected the call, a single question echoed in his mind. Who are you, Jharna?

Later That Night – Jharna's Apartment

Jharna set the dinner table while Malini arranged the dishes. Miransh sat nearby, swinging his legs happily.

Just then, the doorbell rang.

Malini frowned. “Who could it be at this hour?”

Jharna walked to the door and opened it—only to be met with a smirking Ivaan.

“You?!” she exclaimed.

Before she could say more, Miransh ran up in excitement. “Superhero!” he cheered, hugging Ivaan tightly.

Ivaan lifted him up with ease. “Missed me already, champ?”

Jharna folded her arms. “What are you doing here?”

Ivaan stepped inside, looking around casually. “I was just passing by and thought—”

“Oh, spare me the excuse,” Jharna cut him off. “This is my house, not your relative’s place where you can drop by uninvited.”

Ignoring her irritation, Ivaan turned to her and said, “I want to marry you.”

Silence fell over the room.

Jharna, Malini, and Miransh all stared at him in shock.

"I want to marry you," Ivaan declared.

Jharna’s eyes widened in shock, her surprise quickly giving way to anger.

"Have you been drinking?" she snapped.

Ivaan, trying to maintain his composure, shook his head. "No, I'm in my senses. I genuinely want to marr—"

"Say one more word, and I'll break all your teeth," Jharna cut him off, her voice laced with fury.

Sensing the rising tension, Malini intervened gently. "Jharna, dear, calm down."

Jharna, still fuming, turned to her. "How can I calm down, Auntie? He barges into my house and starts spewing nonsense!"

Malini tried to reassure her. "Relax, Jharna. Miransh is here too."

At the mention of Miransh, Jharna instinctively glanced at the little boy, who was watching her with innocent, blinking eyes. Realizing she had lost her temper in front of him, she took a deep breath and steadied herself. Turning back to Ivaan, she spoke with restrained frustration, "Listen, stop bothering me and leave."

But Ivaan, unfazed, smirked. "So, when should I bring my mother to meet you?"

Jharna's anger flared again, but this time she held it in check. Instead, she turned to Malini and said, "Auntie, please take Ansh inside."

Malini nodded and led Miransh away. Once they were out of sight, Jharna faced Ivaan head-on. "What's your problem? Have you made a vow to never let me live in peace? Weren't you the one who said you had no time to waste on me? And now, suddenly, this new drama?"

His expression softened. "This isn't drama, Jharna. I love you."

She let out a sarcastic laugh. "Oh, really? We have met barely twice, and now you're in love with me?"

Ivaan stepped closer, his voice dropping to a whisper. "Love takes only a moment."

Uncomfortable with his proximity, Jharna instinctively took a step back. "Never. I will never marry you. You've got your answer. Now leave."

His next words stopped her in her tracks.

"You can't even do this much for your son?"

Jharna's eyes widened in confusion.

The Next Day – Maurya Villa

The family sat around the dining table, an air of silence settling over them. Unspoken words passed between them through glances and subtle gestures. Ivaan, however, ate his breakfast with complete indifference, seemingly unaffected by the tension.

Shikha finally gathered the courage to speak. "Ivaan, are you really going to marry Jharna?"

Without looking up, he replied, "Yes, Mom. Asking me repeatedly won't change the truth."

Shikha hesitated before continuing. "But why Jharna? Is it because we pressured you? Look, if that's the case, take your time. Don't make a decision that will ruin your life."

Ivaan set down his spoon and met her gaze. "First, you were upset that I refused to marry, and now you're upset that I agreed. What exactly do you want? And what's wrong with Jharna?"

Deepa interjected, "Ivaan, you don't understand. She's already a mother." He let out a humorless laugh. "So? Chhaya was single, wasn't she? Everyone adored her. And what did she do? Would you rather I marry someone like her?"

Deepa fell silent. Ivaan stood up, his voice firm. "I'm marrying Jharna. That's final." Without another word, he walked away.

Shikha sighed and resumed eating, disappointment etched on her face.

Vihaan finally spoke up. "Mami Ji, what's wrong with Jharna? She's kind, mature, and honest, she's perfect for Ivaan Bhai. And most importantly, she doesn't care about our wealth—unlike Chhaya."

Shikha shook her head. "You think I have a problem with her? I don't. Just look at her, she's a wonderful girl. But she's already a mother. Her world will always revolve around her child. Will she be able to give my Ivaan the love he deserves?"

Vihaan had no answer. He turned to Adhik, who was stirring his food absentmindedly. "What's on your mind?" Vihaan asked in a hushed voice.

Adhik snapped out of his thoughts. "I'm just wondering... Yesterday, he couldn't stand the sight of her. And today, he wants to marry her? That doesn't seem normal, does it?"

Vihaan, now deep in thought himself, had no response.

Sitting on a park bench, Jharna closed her eyes as last night's conversation replayed in her mind.

Ivaan, "Your son might never say it, but he misses his father. The father he's never known. He told me I remind him of his dad. He won't say it to you because he loves you too much to hurt you."

Malini, "Jharna, I think you should say yes to this marriage. It's the best decision for you and for Miransh. You'll find a partner, and Miransh will have the father he needs."

Miransh, "Momma, why don't you marry the superhero?"

Tears welled in her eyes as she whispered, "Ansh never asked about his father. I thought he didn't need one. But the truth is, he never said anything because he didn't want to burden me. He's such a good son. But I... I failed as a mother. How could I not understand his feelings? I'm a terrible mother."

A voice interrupted her thoughts.

"You're the best mother in the world."

She wiped her tears and turned to see Ivaan approaching.

"You raised Miransh alone, gave him a good life, and instilled the best values in him. You've passed as a mother, Jharna. You've protected him from the world, and that's what makes you the best mother."

She took a deep breath. "I can do anything for my son. Even marry you. But will you love Miransh as your own?"

Without hesitation, Ivaan answered, "Yes! I will always love him like my own."

Jharna studied him carefully. "It's easy to say. But raising another man's child as your own? That's not easy. What if you step back?"

Ivaan's gaze was unwavering. "I never back down from responsibility. And in Miransh, I see my own childhood. I never got my father's love. I won't let Miransh suffer the same way. I will give him all the happiness he deserves."

Jharna saw the confidence in his eyes. For the first time, she believed him.

Taking a deep breath, she said, "Alright then. I'll marry you."

A victorious smile played on Ivaan's lips. That's all I wanted to hear.

Sitara's Note

Some proposals don't come with roses... they arrive wrapped in fire, confusion, and questions no one was ready to answer.

This chapter was intense—for Jharna, for Ivaan, and for me as a writer. Writing it felt like standing at the edge of a cliff—heart pounding, unsure if the fall will hurt or if the wings will appear. When Ivaan said “I want to marry you,” it wasn't just about love. It was a promise. One that carried the weight of a child's silent wish and a mother's aching heart.

Jharna's strength has always inspired me, but in this chapter... her vulnerability stole the spotlight. And Ivaan? For the first time, he wasn't just fighting the world—he was fighting for something. If this chapter stirred something inside you—whether it was a smile, a tear, or a quiet pause—tell me in the comments. Your words keep me writing, always.

Until the next leap of hearts,

– Sitara Chandria