

Chapter 8: The Unwanted Husband

As soon as he entered, Jharna stormed towards him like a tempest, her eyes blazing with fury. She grabbed his collar with trembling hands, her voice breaking with rage and desperation.

"Where is my Ansh? What have you done with him? Where have you hidden my child?"

Flashback

Jharna's voice echoed with cold finality. "Can't you hear properly? I said I won't marry you!"

Ivaan smiled, but it didn't reach his eyes. "You said I emotionally blackmailed you." His smile slowly faded, replaced by a dangerous glint. His tone dropped, sharp and venomous. "Well, I hadn't done it... until now. But now I will."

The shift in his demeanor sent a chill down Jharna's spine. She stared at him, stunned, as Amaan quietly approached her and handed her a tablet. Confused, she took it hesitantly. But as her eyes landed on the screen, the ground beneath her feet seemed to slip away. Her breath caught in her throat. Her heart pounded violently in her chest.

There, on the screen, was Miransh. He was in a dimly lit room, playing with a black panther. The massive animal leapt toward him playfully, again and again — its sharp claws dangerously close to his small body. The sight made her blood run cold.

She screamed and rushed toward Ivaan's locker, her cries echoing in the silence. She banged her fists against the hard metal and sobbed uncontrollably.

"How could you do this?" she cried. "How could you be so cruel? There's not even a shred of humanity left in you!"

Ivaan leaned casually against the locker, a smirk playing on his lips. "Didn't you say I'm a criminal? And criminals don't have humanity, do they?" He stepped closer, his voice deadly calm. "So... let's get married. Because

ow, you know exactly what will happen if you try to go against me."

Jharna fell to her knees, completely broken. The fight left her body as she wept — helpless, trapped, and shattered.

Flashback Ends

Tears streaming down her face, Jharna now stood before him, her body trembling with rage and pain.

"You're heartless," she whispered through clenched teeth. "How could you leave a child—a little child—with a wild animal? If anything happens to my Ansh, I swear to God, I will kill you."

The hatred in her eyes was fierce and raw, burning like wildfire.

Ivaan calmly fixed his collar, unfazed. "Nothing happened to Miransh. He's safe."

"Safe?!" she screamed. "With that animal? Are you out of your mind?"

"I told you," he said evenly. "That black panther is my pet. He's trained. He listens to me."

"I don't want to hear anything from you!" Jharna shouted, her voice trembling with anger and pain. "I just want my child. Either give me my son right now, or I'll go straight to your mother and tell her how you tricked me into this marriage."

Without waiting for a response, she turned on her heel to leave the room.

But before she could reach the door, Ivaan swiftly grabbed her wrist. His grip was firm but not hurtful. Jharna glared at him, yanking her hand slightly. "What are you doing? Where are you taking me?"

He said nothing.

Without a word, he led her to his car, opened the passenger door, and gently pushed her inside. He got in from the other side and started the car. Throughout the drive, Jharna bombarded him with questions, her frustration growing with each passing second. "Ivaan! Talk to me! Where are you taking me?"

But Ivaan's eyes remained focused on the road, his silence as sharp as a blade.

Eventually, the car halted in front of a grand villa—private, isolated, and unfamiliar to her. Her confusion deepened. Ivaan stepped out and opened her door, again taking her hand, ignoring her protests as he led her inside.

Inside the villa, he opened a door and gently released her wrist.

Before Jharna could unleash her fury, a familiar, joyous voice echoed in the room, "Momma!"

Her eyes widened.

Miransh.

There he was—safe, smiling, arms wide open. Relief flooded her chest, and she was just about to run to him when a sudden growl echoed from the shadows. A black panther stepped forward, its sharp gaze locked on her.

She froze.

Startled, she stumbled back into Ivaan's chest. He steadied her and then stepped forward, placing himself protectively between her and the panther.

"Don't you dare," he warned the Black Panther. "She is my wife."

"Yeah!" Miransh piped up bravely. "She's my momma. Don't scare her."

The panther blinked, then retreated into a quiet corner.

Jharna was stunned by everything she'd just witnessed, but her attention remained on Miransh. She rushed into his arms, hugging him tightly.

"Happy marriage, Momma!" Miransh chirped, his voice sweet and innocent.

Her heart skipped a beat. Marriage. The word echoed in her mind, dragging her back to unwanted memories. Her gaze shifted to Ivaan, who now sat on the sofa, scrolling through his phone like nothing had happened.

Why? she wondered. Why did he marry me? Was it just for Miransh, or is

there something deeper behind it all?

“Momma, I’m hungry,” Miransh said, tugging on her hand.

“What would you like to eat?” Ivaan asked, finally speaking.

“Hmm... Shahi Paneer and Poori!” he replied with glee.

Ivaan smiled. “Okay, let’s make it.” He picked up Miransh and headed to the kitchen. Jharna followed silently behind.

Back at Maurya Villa, Shikha paced the hall restlessly, eyes darting toward the main door. Her anxiety was visible in every movement. Just then, Adhik descended the stairs, carrying a jug of water. Seeing her, he let out a sigh of disappointment.

The door creaked open, and in walked Abhimaan.

A smile finally lit up Shikha’s face. She rushed to him. “Where were you? I’ve been waiting. Today was our daughter-in-law’s first entry, and you didn’t even come to bless her!”

Abhimaan scoffed. “Bless her? Why this pretense, Shikha? The wedding happened, the rituals completed. My presence didn’t matter. That girl isn’t my daughter-in-law. And her husband isn’t my son.”

Shikha stared at him, stunned. “What are you saying!”

Abhimaan’s voice turned cold. “He said it to my face. That he doesn’t consider me his father. So why should I accept him as my son?”

“But he’s just a child, angry with you—” Shikha tried to reason.

“Enough!” he snapped. “My business is already in crisis. Don’t add to my headache.”

He stormed off, leaving behind a silence filled with unspoken pain.

Shikha’s eyes welled up. Adhik stepped forward, gently wiping her tears.

“Don’t waste your tears on someone who doesn’t value them,” he said softly.

Shikha turned and walked away without a word. Watching her go, Adhik murmured to himself, "I just hope Jharna and Miransh can handle the storms in this family."

Meanwhile, in the cozy kitchen of the villa, Ivaan was cooking. Jharna stood beside him, lending a hand while Miransh sat on the counter, swinging his legs.

“Who taught you to cook, Superhero?” he asked curiously.

With a faint, bitter smile, Ivaan said, “Necessity teaches everything.”

Jharna paused, her hands still. That sentence—she understood it all too well. Their pasts were different, yet somehow similar. She glanced at Ivaan, noting the way his face betrayed nothing.

Suddenly, Miransh exclaimed, “Dad!”

Both adults turned to him, startled.

“I mean, you’re my dad now, right?” Miransh grinned. “You married my momma, so now we’re a family.”

Ivaan and Jharna exchanged a stunned look.

Jharna muttered under her breath, “Why are you even surprised? You were so eager for this marriage. Now deal with the consequences.”

Ivaan raised an eyebrow. “Consequences, huh?”

“Momma! I’m hungry!” Miransh interrupted.

“Yes, yes, it’s almost ready,” Jharna said quickly, flustered.

Later, as Ivaan wiped his hands, his gaze fell on Jharna. She was adjusting the necklace around her neck, clearly uncomfortable in her bridal attire.

Her jewellery was tangled in her hair.

He walked up to her.

As he reached out to help, Jharna stepped back, alarmed. “What... what are you doing?” she stammered. “Don’t think I’m weak. I know how guys like you think. If you try to force me—”

Ivaan blinked, stunned. What does she think of me?

Before he could respond, she held a knife defensively.

One step closer, and—

Ivaan calmly took the knife from her trembling hand and pulled her into his arms. Their faces were mere inches apart. Jharna’s breath hitched.

Her heart pounded violently. Her limbs wouldn't obey her. Why does this always happen when he comes close? she wondered. Why do I feel like this? As if... as if no one's ever held me before.

“So,” Ivaan whispered in her ear, “you're not weak, huh?”

Jharna squirmed, trying to escape, but her hands trembled uncontrollably.

Ivaan noticed her reaction. Confusion flickered in his eyes. She has a child. But this... this isn't how a woman behaves if she's experienced... Has she never—?

Just then, Miransh barged in. “What are you doing without me?”

They sprang apart.

“You were hugging without me? Seriously?” Miransh pouted.

Relieved by the interruption, Jharna sighed.

Ivaan chuckled and quickly said, “Your momma was struggling with this necklace. I was just helping her.”

He removed the necklace gently and looked at Jharna. “You can go change. I'll serve dinner.”

Jharna gave a quick nod and turned to leave.

“Hey,” Ivaan called after her. “If anything else refuses to come off... you can call me.”

He winked.

Jharna glared at him and marched out. Ivaan grinned to himself.

Sitara's Note

There are chapters you write, and then there are chapters that write you.

This one? It left pieces of me behind in every scene.

What happens when a woman is forced into a bond she never wanted, and a man uses love, pain, and power as weapons to hold onto her?

What happens when the child between them dreams of a family, while both adults are still haunted by their pasts?

Jharna's fire, Ivaan's shadows, and Miransh's pure little heart—they collided in this chapter like storm clouds bursting into thunder.

But beyond the pain, there's a question that lingers in silence: Is love still possible... when everything about its beginning was wrong?

Let's see where destiny takes them from here.

With my heart tucked in between these lines,

— Sitara Chandria