

Ch 25: The Silent Storm

Midnight

The sky split open with a scream of thunder.

Lightning slashed the darkness like a warning.

And the wind howled as if it carried a secret meant to be heard.

A car cut through the storm like a silver bullet—

its headlights slicing through sheets of rain, its driver gripped tight with fear.

Inside, Ivaan's hands clutched the steering wheel, his knuckles white, his heart louder than the storm outside.

His eyes scanned the dark road desperately, as if every second lost could cost everything.

And then...

He saw her.

A familiar silhouette standing at the edge of the viewpoint.

Jharna.

A fragile figure against the rage of the wind.

Relief washed through him, and a soft smile broke through the panic on his face.

But only for a second.

Because just above her—a broken wire from the nearby tower swung dangerously, sparks flying in the air.

And it was falling.

“Jharna!!”

He didn't think.

Didn't wait.

He ran.

Faster than his breath, faster than the lightning.

He reached her just in time—

grabbed her by the waist

and pulled her into his arms as the wire crashed behind them.

He held her tight.
Breathing hard.
Heart racing.
But then... he looked at her.
And everything stopped.
Her body was warm—too warm.
Her head lolled weakly against his chest.
Her eyes were half-shut, her lips pale.
She wasn't responding.
Not to his voice.
Not to his touch.
Like she was... present but absent.
A breathing corpse.
Ivaan's heartbeat spiked.
“Jharna?” he whispered, shaking her gently.
She didn't answer.
He touched her forehead—burning.
His eyes widened in panic.
Without wasting another second, he lifted her in his arms, ran back to the car, and sped into the night.

Maurya Mansion – Later That Night

The lights were dim.
A stillness had fallen over the house like mourning.
Jharna lay unconscious on the bed,
her hair damp with sweat, her face pale and unmoving.
Ivaan sat beside her, holding her hand like it was the only thing anchoring him to earth.
Miransh knelt on the other side, his small hands gripping her fingers, his little face etched with fear.

The doctor, trying to maintain her professionalism, looked between them with growing unease.

“Sir... please, I need some space to check her.”

But neither of them moved.

They couldn't.

How could they?

She wasn't just sick.

She was slipping.

Finally, the doctor managed to check her vitals.

She injected the necessary medicine and turned back to them, trying to sound calm.

“Jharna ma'am is under severe emotional stress. That's what triggered the fever. She'll be fine. She just needs rest and care. I've given her injection to bring the temperature down. She'll feel better soon.”

No one responded.

No nods. No questions.

Just silence.

Because to the doctor, this was just a fever.

But to Ivaan and Miransh...

This was the first time they'd seen her fall like this—utterly defeated.

She had broken down,

not just in body,

but in spirit.

And that terrified them both.

The Restless Night

Not a single moment passed in peace that night.

Ivaan and Miransh stayed beside her like silent guardians, trading shifts without words,

their movements filled with quiet desperation.

One dipped a cloth in cool water and placed it gently on her forehead.
The other sat at her feet, rubbing them softly,
as if his small hands could bring warmth back into her.
One checked her temperature again and again,
the other whispered stories into her ear—hoping she'd open her eyes and
scold him for talking too much.
The hours crawled by.

Jharna wasn't just physically unwell.
She was trapped.
Inside a storm no one else could see.
A storm called memory.

Flashback — Hours Ago

The wind howled on the cliff's edge,
where one woman reached for another—
with a name on her lips
and a wound in her heart.
Her fingers trembled as they touched the woman's shoulder.
“Meera Di?”

The woman turned.
And everything stopped.
It was her.

Her sister. Her friend. Her Meera Di.
Tears burst from Jharna's eyes like a broken dam.
She couldn't stop herself—she rushed forward and hugged her tightly,
clinging as though Meera might disappear again.
“I can't believe it,” she whispered, voice cracked with emotion.
“You're here. You're really here...”
But Meera...
did not hug her back.

Instead, with cold eyes and a rigid stance,
she pushed Jharna away—so hard that Jharna stumbled back and nearly
fell.

Shock froze her in place.

She looked up at Meera, confused, hurt.

And then Meera spoke—

not with love, but rage.

“Yeah. Because you left me there to die.”

Jharna’s breath caught.

“D-Di... what are you saying? I was with you in the hospital... and then
the nurse came... she said you...”

She couldn’t finish the sentence.

Meera’s voice turned sharper.

“She said I was dead. And you believed her?”

Jharna stood still, lips quivering,

her eyes searching Meera’s for mercy.

But there was none.

“She told you I died, and you just... accepted it?”

“You didn’t even come check. Not once.”

“You left me there—abandoned me!”

Jharna choked, “She... she said...”

“What did she say?” Meera interrupted, voice rising.

“And what did you do, Jharna? You took my child... and you left me to
die!”

Jharna’s head shook in denial.

“You know what happened after you walked out of that hospital?”

Jharna didn’t answer—she couldn’t.

Meera’s voice cracked—equal parts pain and fury.

“That nurse tried to harvest my organs. I was alive, Jharna. ALIVE. And
she tried to cut me open like I was already dead.”

“I was screaming... writhing in pain... but no one came.”

“Because you were gone.”

Now Meera’s eyes filled with tears, too.

Jharna stepped forward, shaken, “Di... are you okay now? Are you—”

But Meera shoved her away again.

“Don’t pretend to care now. If you did, you wouldn’t have walked away.”

Jharna burst into tears, hands folded as if praying for forgiveness.

Meera collapsed to her knees.

“I escaped from there—bleeding, half-conscious. They chased me, Jharna. I fell into a river. When I woke up...”

She paused, voice barely a whisper.

“Three years had passed.”

Jharna gasped.

Meera looked up, eyes hollow.

“Some people saved my life... but I lost my three years.”

“I spent those years in a coma.”

“And when I woke up, do you know the first name I uttered?”

She pointed to her heart.

“My baby.”

Jharna closed her eyes in agony.

“But he wasn’t there.”

“Because you took him.”

Both sisters sobbed—drenched in pain, years of silence crashing between them.

“I never got to hold my baby, not even once,” Meera whispered.

“Since I woke up, I’ve been searching for him—city to city.”

“And I didn’t even know what he looked like.”

Jharna tried to reach for her again.

“Di...”

But Meera stepped back, her voice turning bitter.

“Then one day, I saw you on TV. With your husband.”

A cruel smile curled on her lips.

“And that’s how I found you. Found him.”

She let out a broken laugh.

“But look at my fate—when I met my own child...”

“He didn’t know me.”

Her smile vanished.

“Because you never told him.”

She grabbed Jharna by the wrist, trembling with emotion.

“Why didn’t you tell him I was his mother?”

“You could’ve at least told him I was his aunt. Your sister. Something.”

“But no. You erased me completely.”

Her voice broke.

“Because of you... I’m a stranger to my own son.”

Jharna collapsed to the ground, sobbing.

Meera screamed—the kind of scream that carried years of buried agony.

And then—

the sky wept.

Rain poured down on the cliff.

Two sisters cried, as if the universe cried with them.

After a moment, Meera stood up, her voice steely.

“I want my son back.”

Jharna looked up, stunned.

“Di... what are you saying?”

“I don’t care how you explain it to him,” Meera said, “but I want my child back.”

Jharna stumbled forward.

“You... you want to take him away? How can I give up my Ansh—he’s my whole life!”

“He’s my son,” Meera thundered.

“Understand that. He’s mine. I gave birth to him.”

She pointed a trembling finger.

“You have everything—husband, family, money... and I have nothing.”

“I’m only asking for one thing—my child. And you won’t even give me that?”

Jharna tried to explain, tried to speak—

But Meera silenced her.

“I don’t want to hear it. You have one week, Jharna.”

“If you don’t tell him the truth by then, I’ll come to your house and take him myself. Even if I have to go to the police.”

Jharna gasped, her voice nearly a whisper.

“No... Di... please...”

Meera turned to leave.

But Jharna fell to her knees—clutching her sister’s legs.

“Di, please don’t do this. I won’t survive without him. Don’t take my Ansh away from me.”

“Anything else... anything you say... I’ll do it. I swear. But not this.”

Meera yanked her foot free and walked away.

Jharna collapsed in the mud and rain, screaming.

“No! My Ansh! I can’t live without him... don’t take him from me!”

Flashback Ends

On the bed, Jharna twisted in her sleep, sweat beading her forehead.

“No... don’t take my Ansh away... no... no... please...”

Her voice cracked in agony.

Ivaan rushed to her side, gently cupping her face.

“Jharna, relax. Your Ansh is here. He’s with you. You’re safe.”

Miransh clutched her tightly.

“I’m here, Momma. I’m not going anywhere.”

She opened her eyes slowly—and the moment she saw Miransh—

She hugged him like never before, crying into his shoulder.

Her body shook with sobs.
Ivaan watched, frozen.
Shocked by the pain in her arms.
And by the secret he didn't yet know.

Sitara's Note

That's all for today.

I can't write anymore...

Not because the chapter is finished.

But because I am trembling.

Tears are still resting in the corner of my eyes as I write this part.

Today, I didn't just write Meera's pain or Jharna's breakdown—
I felt it.

And I hope, somewhere in your heart... you did too.

Some stories are soft.

Some stories are sharp.

But some chapters... leave you breathless.

This one left me breathless.

I don't know what's right or wrong anymore.

But I know one thing—

A mother's love can fight the world.

But what happens... when two mothers are fighting for the same
child?

Keep that question in your heart, because what's coming next... is
going to break something. Maybe inside them. Maybe inside you.
Maybe inside me.

So for now, I'll just whisper—

Thank you for reading this far.

Thank you for walking with me through pain and poetry.

And if your heart is aching too—

I'm hugging you from this side of the page.

With all my love,

and a story still unfolding...

— Sitara Chandria