

Ch 33: The Rescue?

Maurya Mansion – Washroom

Tia (Sagarika) slipped into the washroom, locking the door behind her.

Her fingers moved quickly as she dialed a number.

The first time, no one picked up.

She exhaled sharply and tried again, tension evident in her eyes. This time, the call connected.

From the other end, a man's amused voice drawled, "Wow... so desperate to talk to me?"

Tia rolled her eyes, forcing her tone to stay composed.

"I need your help again."

His chuckle was laced with mockery, "Your free-help days are over, darling. This time, there's a price."

Her brows furrowed, "Price? What price? What do you want?"

"You," he said, without hesitation.

Her eyes widened in disgust, "Stay in your limits. Do you have any idea who you're talking to?"

"Fine," he replied lazily, "then stay in your limits and help yourself."

She heard the faint click of him about to hang up.

"Wait," she said quickly.

Her voice turned sharp, calculated.

"I'll manage without you. If not today, then tomorrow, I'll take my revenge on Ivaan myself. But you—don't forget—he's the biggest thorn in your path. As long as he's alive, you'll never get what you want. And that's perfectly fine. The bomb squad will be there any moment to save him.

He'll survive... and take everything from you. Goodbye."

She ended the call before he could reply, her chest rising and falling with frustration.

I don't know if my words will affect him...

Open Field

Ivaan and Jharna stood side by side, their movements stiff, as though any sudden motion could trigger disaster. Miransh sat on the bonnet of the car, swinging his legs restlessly. Meera paced like a caged animal, while Amaan stared at his phone, his brow furrowed.

The tension was suffocating.

Then Amaan's phone rang. He snatched it up instantly.

"What?!" His voice rose sharply, his expression darkening.

The call ended as quickly as it began.

Jharna's voice was tight, "What happened?"

"The bomb squad is stuck," Amaan said grimly. "The route they were taking is a one-way road... and there's a massive traffic jam because of a railway crossing. Someone got trapped under a train."

A collective gasp went through the group.

Ivaan's jaw clenched, "How long before they can reach us?"

"I'm not sure, Boss," Amaan admitted. "At least four to five hours."

"What?!" Meera's voice shot up. "They've been standing there since morning—how are they supposed to hold out for that long? What if something happens before they arrive?"

Before anyone could answer, Miransh jumped off the bonnet.

"Momma!"

Meera caught him before he could take off running.

"Let me go! I want Momma!" he cried, struggling in her arms.

"Miransh, please calm down," Meera said, her voice tight. "We're already in enough trouble here."

His little face scrunched in anger.

"This is all your fault!"

Everyone froze.

"Aunty, go away! I hate you!"

The words hit Meera like a slap. Jharna's tone turned firm.

“Ansh! That’s not how you speak to your elders. Say sorry.”

“Sorry,” he muttered, but his eyes held no remorse.

Meera swallowed her hurt and took a deep breath.

“I have an idea.”

All eyes turned to her.

She wiped at her tears and said,

“Jharna, I’ll take your place. You both can get out of there.”

“What nonsense, Di?” Jharna snapped. “Stay where you are!”

“I’m serious. You two have been standing there for so long. I can stand there for a while. The bomb squad will be here in a few hours anyway.”

Ivaan rolled his eyes in disbelief, “You sisters—did you leave your brains at home? She’s standing here because she was stupid enough to ignore me and walk into the minefield. And now you want to do the same?”

“Ivaan, listen to me—” Meera started.

“No,” he cut her off, his tone firm. “From here to where we are, there are at least six or seven mines. We don’t know exactly where they are. If you step on one before reaching us, it’s over.”

Meera opened her mouth to argue but found no words.

Amaan spoke up, “Exactly. This isn’t some food distribution line where you can just swap places. One wrong step, and it’s not just you—it could be all of us.”

“Yes, Di, please,” Jharna added softly. “Stay calm.”

Meera exhaled heavily, tilting her face up to the cloudy sky as if pleading for divine intervention.

Maurya Mansion

Aashiya’s phone beeped. She glanced at it—and froze.

Her face paled.

“What is it?” Vihaan asked quickly. “Is it a message from Amaan?”

The entire room seemed to lean toward her, waiting. Especially Tia. Aashiya nodded slowly, “The bomb squad is stuck in traffic.” Gasps filled the room—except for Tia. Inside, she was smiling. That means... he did his job.

Open Field

Meera tilted her head up toward the cloudy sky, her eyes narrowing as if searching for an answer. Then—something clicked.

“Idea,” she said suddenly.

All eyes snapped to her.

Amaan raised an eyebrow, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

“What now? You planning to fly over there and take her place?”

“Yes,” Meera replied without hesitation.

“What?!” Amaan blinked, confused. Ivaan and Jharna exchanged the same bewildered look.

Meera’s lips curved in determination.

“We can fly them out.”

Jharna frowned.

“Meaning?”

“Meaning,” Meera explained quickly, “we can use a helicopter to lift you both out of the minefield.”

For the first time in hours, a spark of hope broke through the heavy tension.

Ivaan’s eyes lit up with a plan already forming, already working out the possibilities.

“Yes... the mines don’t detonate instantly. They take a few seconds to trigger. If we can calculate the exact timing... this could work.”

Amaan straightened, finally serious.

“Okay. But how do we measure that?”

Jharna quickly offered, “We test it. I’ll throw my phone. Amaan—you time it.”

Amaan nodded, instantly pulling up his phone’s stopwatch.

Jharna handed her phone to Ivaan. He gave Amaan a firm signal before tossing it across the field with all his strength.

Everyone held their breath.

1...2...3...4...5...6...7—

BOOM!

The explosion shook the ground, a blast of dirt and smoke rushing upward. Everyone shielded their faces, coughing as the haze swept over them.

Through the smoke, Amaan glanced at his timer.

“Seven seconds.”

Ivaan’s jaw tightened. His eyes were fierce with focus.

“Good. That means a helicopter escape can work. But we’ll have to be razor sharp. One mistake—and it’s over.”

Amaan straightened.

“Then I’ll call for a helicopter right now.” He reached for his phone.

But Ivaan’s voice cut in, firm.

“Careful, Amaan. It’s not that simple. First, you three need to get to safety—especially Miransh. Once the helicopter arrives, all of you board it first. Only then you use the rope ladder to lift us up. And be extremely cautious.”

“Yes, Boss,” Amaan said, already dialing the number.

Minutes Later

The low thrum of rotor blades filled the air. A helicopter appeared above, circling until it hovered at a safe height away from the minefield.

Ivaan looked toward the others.

“Come on, go. All three of you.”

Miransh shook his head furiously.

“No! I’m not leaving you and Momma!”

Jharna’s voice softened, “Ansh, please. Go.”

“No, Momma,” he said, his voice breaking. “I’m not going without you.”

Meera knelt in front of him, her tone calm but urgent.

“Miransh... don’t you want your Momma and your Superhero to be safe?”

“I do,” he whispered.

“Then please... come with me. For your Momma. I promise, nothing will happen to them.”

His eyes searched Jharna’s. She gave him a small, reassuring nod. Finally, he relented.

“Okay. Let’s go.”

Meera exhaled in relief. She turned to Jharna.

“Don’t worry. I’ll take care of him.”

Jharna managed a small smile and nodded.

The helicopter lowered slightly, still avoiding the field. A rope ladder was thrown down. Miransh climbed first, with Meera guiding him closely. Amaan followed behind them. Within moments, they were all safely inside.

Now it was Ivaan and Jharna’s turn.

The helicopter climbed higher and circled until it hovered directly above them, maintaining the enough height, the sound of the blades roaring across the open field.

Jharna’s hand instinctively clutched the back of Ivaan’s shirt.

“Don’t be scared,” he murmured. “I won’t let anything happen to you.”

She gave him a small, trembling smile.

Two rope ladder were lowered from the helicopter. Jharna and Ivaan each grabbed one, their knuckles white with tension.

Inside, Miransh's voice trembled as he tugged Meera's sleeve.

"Nothing will happen to my Momma and Superhero... right?"

Meera's heart clenched.

"Nothing. I promise."

Amaan leaned out of the helicopter, shouting over the roar.

"Ready?"

"Ready!" they both called back in unison.

Amaan signaled the pilot. The rope ladder tightened as the helicopter began to lift them.

"Fly higher!" Amaan yelled. "The moment they step off, the mines will blow!"

The pilot nodded. Meera pulled Miransh into her arms, holding him tightly.

Jharna and Ivaan dangled in mid-air, gripping the ropes with every ounce of strength. The helicopter rose swiftly.

And then—

BOOM!

The blast shook the air beneath them, a cloud of dirt and smoke rising where they had stood seconds before.

Ivaan and Jharna exhaled in relief.

"Boss, Ma'am—you both okay?" Amaan shouted.

"Yes!" they called back together.

Inside, everyone breathed easier.

"Come on, climb up quickly!" Meera urged.

Jharna and Ivaan began hauling themselves up the rope ladder toward the helicopter—

But then—

Jharna's rope ladder loosened.

Her eyes went wide.

Before Ivaan could react, the rope slipped free from her grasp.

In the blink of an eye—she was falling.

“JHARNA!” Ivaan’s scream tore through the air.

His scream was raw, tearing from his throat like an animal in pain. He lunged forward, his own ladder swinging violently. His fingers stretched toward her—desperate, clawing at the air.

He missed by inches.

Jharna’s wide, terrified eyes locked with his for one fleeting moment—eyes filled with everything she wanted to say but couldn’t.

Inside the helicopter

Meera’s head whipped around at Ivaan’s scream. The sight froze her blood.

“Jharna!” she gasped.

Miransh’s little voice cracked, panic flooding it.

“MOMMA!!!”

He tried to leap toward the open edge, but Meera grabbed him, crushing him to her chest. He kicked, screamed, pounded his fists.

“Let me go! Mommaaaa!”

Amaan was already halfway out the side, leaning dangerously far, his arm reaching toward Ivaan.

“Boss! Hold on! Don’t jump!”

Ivaan didn’t hear him.

His heartbeat thundered like a war drum, each beat screaming the same command—Get to her. Don’t let her go.

Without a second’s hesitation, he released his grip on the rope ladder.

“Boss!!” Amaan’s voice cracked from above, echoing through the chaos—but it couldn’t reach him.

Inside the helicopter, Meera’s hands flew to her mouth, her eyes widening in horror.

“Ivaan...” she whispered, her voice trembling.

Ivaan's only thought—Jharna. He lunged downward, desperate to catch her.

But he was too late.

Branches whipped against him as he crashed through the tangled trees, each strike cutting into his skin. Then—sudden, brutal—he hit the ground.

“Ahhh!”

A raw, guttural scream tore from his chest as pain exploded through his body. His left hand twisted unnaturally, the impact rendering it useless.

“Jharna...” The name slipped out in a broken whisper, barely audible. His eyelids grew heavy, the world fading to black as his eyes slowly closed.

The Valley Below

Jharna's body hit the slope with a sickening thud. Her head struck a jagged rock, and blood began to flow down her temple.

She gasped sharply, her breaths coming in shallow, ragged pulls. Her vision blurred, shapes and colors melting into one another.

Her lips trembled, words slipping out in broken fragments—

“Ivaan... Ansh... No... it can't... it can't be my end... not like this...”

Her voice faltered, trapped in her throat. A single tear slid from the corner of her eye, tracing a path down her cheek.

Her mind flashed with images—

Ansh's first steps.

Ivaan's crooked smile.

Their wedding vows.

That kiss they just shared.

And then—her lashes fluttered once, twice... before her eyes closed, her body going limp.

Sitara's Note

Is this really the end of a beautiful love story... or just the beginning of something even greater?

Two souls who fought destiny at every turn now lie broken in the valley of fate. Jharna's tears, Ivaan's scream—both carried by the wind, both unanswered.

Was love meant to save them, or to destroy them?

Was destiny cruel, or was it weaving another path?

Sometimes... silence holds the loudest answers.

— Sitara Chandria