



**Trapped Wings,  
Open Sky...**

*Still I want to fly high!*

**Nisha Arppit**

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*I dedicate this book to the three most important people in my life.*

*To my father, Mr. Ramkrishna Yadav for allowing me to discover the real me,*

*To my mother, Mrs. Sunita Yadav for praying for my welfare, day and night,*

*&*

*To Arppit for living my dreams more than I do.*



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# *The Flashback- I*

## *“The Bruised Truth”*

### *(Aman and Shreya)*

“**W**hat the fuck are you doing?” Shreya shouted at Aman as she snuggled into his grasp, unwilling to move away.

“Why do you ask when you know what I am doing?” he whispered, playing with her curls.

“If Mom sees-” she was forced to swallow her words when he pushed her against his bedroom wall, their faces just a whisper away from each other.

“This is my bedroom. You are my girlfriend and there is nothing wrong in what I am doing”.

“In this house, it is,” she said. “Your mom, if she finds out what we are up to then she would never let me inside this house-never-ever”, she continued with a grin.

“Alright! But-” He pulled her towards him, grabbing her waist as he was in no mood to reason. The more she tried to resist, the more he pressed her against his body.

“Please, let me go. What are you doing?” There was no plea in her voice but anger. However, deep inside, even she wanted him desperately.

He didn't let her utter another word by locking her lips with his.

Her dress was a complete mess. Her hair was loose and her *dupatta* was on the floor. She couldn't move. She tried to push him away but he was too strong for her. He didn't notice her protests because he was busy exploring her body and after sometime, she stopped fighting and let him do whatever he was doing.

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When he realised what he was doing, he explained, “Oh Shreya! Forgive me! We are meeting after a month. Your saying no to me is like asking a hungry lion not to feast upon the yummy prey that’s taunting him to have it.”

“Shut up!” she said with a forced anger, smiling and blushing at the same time.

She wanted to stay in his arms at that moment, lie down and listen to his heartbeats but she feared that his mother or sisters could walk in anytime. So she dared not. She was constantly looking at the door in order to avoid any embarrassing scene.

“Relax. No one will come. Mom is busy with her *pooja*, and Rashi and Rakhi are not at home”.

Without wasting any more time, he dragged her to the bed and climbed on top of her and kissed her passionately, forgetting everything else.

“Hey *bhagwan!* What’s going on here?” The clattering *pooja thali* startled them more than Aman’s mom, who was at the door. Her reddened angry face and its expression made her resemble a big fat Dracula.

They were embarrassed but he took charge of the situation and asked, “Ma, can’t you knock before entering?”

“I knew it. This girl is already influencing you. You are asking me, your mother, to knock before entering a room in her own goddamn house. Way to go *beta*-way to go. She was fuming and it seemed this was the opportunity she was waiting for to vent her accumulated anger on Shreya. Taking a deep breath she continued, “Everyday in newspapers, we read about sons abandoning their old parents. Now I know how and why. Today you are asking me to knock this door and probably tomorrow you will not even think for a while before throwing me out of this house. *Hai na?*” She paused so she could glare at Shreya.

Shreya was not only embarrassed but angry on Aman. However, there was nothing that she could do at that moment so she continued staring at the floor silently cracking her knuckles.

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Aman's mom abused Shreya as she cleaned the floor and when Shreya hesitantly stepped forward to help her, she cried, "*Aye!* You clean yourself first. Don't deprave my *pooja thali* by touching it. *Badi aayi saaf karne wali*".

Shreya moved away and cringed in a corner with her head hung down. She was livid but the silence prevailed for awhile. Everyone looked at each other, slowly. Aman's mom moved her plump body towards the door but not before shooting few more abuses at Shreya. Aman did not stop his mom instead stood quietly in another corner of the room because he knew that was the best thing to do. His mom never liked Shreya as she didn't fit into her definition of *bahu*.

Aman thought it's over now and was about to close the door when his mom came like a whirlwind and pushed the door open. She cried, "Don't you dare to close the door. Aman, I am tolerating everything only for you but listen one thing, this is my house, I'm the owner." She was screaming so loudly that if she had tried to scream a little louder, her vocal cord would have collapsed. She picked up Shreya's *dupatta* from the floor and threw it on her face.

"Shameless girl!" she muttered as she walked away, leaving the door wide open, content with the abuses she had thrown at Shreya.

Though shreya was tearful, She found it difficult to express her feelings. She sat at the corner of the bed, trembling with mixed emotions.

"Hey, I am sorry", he put his hand around her shoulder but she was in no position to respond. It was not the first time that his mother had spoken to her like that. Ever since she had started visiting him at his house, his mother welcomed her with abuses and look of disgust. She would comment about her dresses or her cars as she came in. She always made sure that she passed a comment to prove that she, Shreya, was not good enough to become her *bahu*. Despite of his mom's taunts, Aman continued his relationship and turned a deaf ear to his mom. In retaliation, his mom came up with new methods of harassing her.

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Aman and Shreya, lovebirds as their friends called them, were in love ever since they had laid eyes upon each other. Even though Shreya was the only daughter of Indra and Shailja Nanavati, and Aman came from a very humble family, his father being a government servant, they were a couple. She was brought up with all the luxuries in the world while Aman had his middle class values intact with its typical upbringing. Shreya's father, like all other business tycoons, could give her more money than she could have asked for but what he could never give her was a little time and attention. It was the same with her mother who was a renowned social worker. These bits comprised her banal filmy house. With time, Aman became her only confidant, friend and guide.

He, being the only son, was the sole hope to his soon-to-be-retired father. He was employed in an IT company in Sales, the only job he thought that would fetch more money than the salaries offered elsewhere. She, in the meantime, was waiting for her Australian visa to pursue her dreams. She wanted to study advertising. He was busy saving money for a rainy day. For him, every day was a rainy day. The problem was that she was extremely possessive and didn't want to share him with anybody. Therefore, she kept on insisting that he should accompany her to Australia. However, he always declined it, politely. His frequent yet unfruitful attempts to make her understand his situation and priorities not only angered her but pinched her ego as well. She always got what she wanted, actually more than what she wanted and he was denying her. She truly believed in the saying, 'Everything is fair in love and war.' For her, it was a war between her and his mother.

*“The customer you are calling is moved out of the coverage area.  
Please try later!”*

It was the twentieth time she was hearing the recorded message. She had been trying to reach Aman on his cell-phone, all morning, but it was not reachable. No one was answering the landline either. She was too worried to sit and wait for him to call back so she decided to pay him a visit and see whether everything was alright.

There was a big lock shining on the door. She looked around but didn't see anyone so she went to the next door to enquire about Aman and his family.

“Hello Aunty! I'm Shreya. Sorry to disturb you but-”

“What do you want?” The lady snapped as she seemed to be in a hurry.

“Can you please tell me where's Aman and his family?”

“His father is in the hospital. Didn't you know?” The lady looked smug as she spoke.

With a heavy heart, she headed to the hospital, cursing him for not bothering to inform her.

She didn't like hospitals because of the miserable cries of pain that echoed all over the place. The enquiry counter was empty and the typical smell of phenyl assailed her nostrils. The irksome smell was driving her nuts. Covering her mouth and nose with *dupatta*, she walked meticulously along the side of the corridor, stopping every now and then to ask the white uniformed personnel passing by if they knew where Aman's family was. Finally, after describing the family and giving out their names, she found herself at the cardiology unit.

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Her legs refused to take a step forward as soon as she spotted Aman seated outside the ICU in a timid, stationary position on the bench. His head was rested against the wall behind him. His eyes were closed and he was still in his night suit. She glanced at the ICU through the glass and saw his father on the bed. His mother and both his sisters weren't around.

She walked up to him and without making any noise, slowly, she sat beside him. With trembling hand she touched his shoulder to announce her presence. His reddened and somber eyes seemed shocked to see her there. But he quickly wiped his tears and faked a smile. And when she reached out to hug him, he pulled her into his arms, sobbing and poured his grief out.

"Everything will be alright. Don't worry." She tried to console him but his pain was choking her.

"Papa-him-I can't do without him", he broke down. She felt so helpless. She couldn't watch him broken and devastated. After awhile, he composed himself, rubbing his eyes carelessly.

"I'm sorry. I couldn't inform you about what happened. For the last two days, I've just been running around the hospital."

"How is your father now?" she asked.

"Hopefully, he's out of danger. This was his second attack. We need to be more careful from now onwards, otherwise-" he swallowed his words but she could sense his pain. He continued, "He will retire next month. Rakhi's college fees, Rashi's wedding, I don't know what to -"

"I've got the Australian visa", she cuts in and before she was done, she realized that she shouldn't have mentioned it. It wasn't the right time to talk about the visa.

The world around him collapsed but he managed to put on a smile and said, "Oh- Good! Congratulations, anyway! You are finally going to follow your dream. Lucky!" The sarcasm in his voice was all too clear.

"I know this is not the right time to talk about this. It's just that I've been trying hard to reach you for the last two days."

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“It’s alright. You are free to go. All the best!” He got up to move away but she held his wrist and said, “Please! Listen to me, once. I’m not selfish but I’m afraid of losing you. You know how much I love you”

“Really?” His tone gave away his anger.

Looking into his eyes, holding his hands, she asked, “Won’t you come with me?” When all she got was a fierce look, she mellowed down a little and with tears in her eyes continued.

“Please come with me! Don’t let me go alone. I need you. We will be together. We will work hard and solve everything. Please don’t let me go alone- I need you. I need you so much.” Aman was just staring at her, biting his lower lip. When she didn’t stop he burst out in anger.

“Do you need me more than my dad does? Do you understand the meaning of love or family? Do you? Enough of your drama!” His questions answered everything. He freed himself from her hold, said, “Bye! You are a free bird now.” and walked away.

She couldn’t do anything but watch him walk away, disappearing right in front of her eyes. “How could he do this to me?” she thought. She didn’t know what else to do but leave. Her heart was broken and her ego shattered into million pieces.



It was almost a month since they had their last conversation. No phone calls, no messages as if they never knew each other. He missed her very much and yearned to speak to her but she did not respond to his calls. She was still angry for he had chosen his family over her.

He loved her very much and wanted to be with her the rest of his life. However, she was too demanding and he had to prioritize his family over her because they needed him.

He wanted her to be on his side while he struggled to cope up with the things that were happening with him and around him, and the reason why he wanted her was simple-he loved her very much.

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He was sitting in his room silently, the phone continued to ring in silent mode as he reviewed their last conversation over and over in his head. The sound of his ragged breath broke his concentration and then the plaintive plea of the ringing phone caught his attention. He reached out and hastily grabbed the phone. It was her.

“Shreya! Why didn’t you return my calls? I’d been waiting. I’m sorry for what happened the other day. Please, let me explain!” He continued with his monologue until he realized that she hadn’t uttered a word. The neurons in his brain ruptured as he waited for her to say something, anything at all.

“Aman,” she said and then the music of silence took over the phone lines.

“What - are you alright?” He asked her. He could sense that there was something wrong.

“I am pregnant.”

He froze as his mind stopped working, suddenly he felt he was in a dark tunnel with both of its end closed but after awhile, he managed to ask, “No - you can’t be. How can you be? Did you just say that you’re pregnant? Or I heard it wrong?”

“I am pregnant,” she repeated.

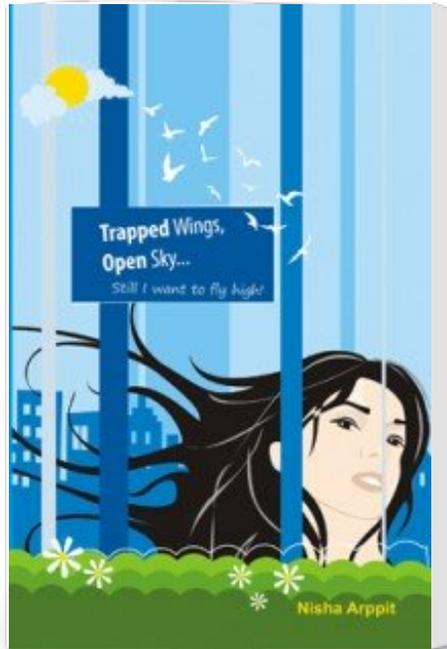
He was baffled. He couldn’t think straight. He wriggled, creased and winced all at the same time. At last he asked, “How could you be pregnant?” His tone gave away his doubt. “We made out two months ago and I had used a condom, hadn’t I?”

“Oh! So you mean to say that I slept with someone else? Are you saying that I cheated behind you?” she cried.

“No. I didn’t say that. I - I don’t know how. How did it happen? I’m sorry but I really don’t get it.”

“You don’t get it? You want me to explain how it happened? I missed my periods so I went to doctor. You got no clue how I felt when she announced that I’m pregnant.”

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