Lage Raho Chunmun Bhai

Prologue: The Reluctant Nomad

Chunmun Singh had always prided himself on his adaptability. It wasn't merely a professional attribute; it was a survival trait honed over years in the high-stakes, transient world of IT consulting. At 35, he was the archetype of quiet efficiency: a solution architect for InfoCys, a reputable mid-tier firm nestled in the organized chaos of Bangalore's tech landscape. His domain was the arcane. He was the maestro of troubleshooting complex, decaying systems, the sculptor

of scalable cloud architectures, and the calm center that turned client-side operational pandemonium into streamlined, elegant efficiency. His uniform was the professional's shield: a neatly trimmed, salt-and-pepper beard, wire-rimmed glasses, and an unwavering rotation of crisp, pastel button-downs—a man who preferred function over flash, logic over drama.

But beneath this calm, professional exterior, a dark current of dread flowed. It was a creeping, personal curse that followed him not just across office parks, but across cities, state lines, and ultimately, continents. It was a shadow with a name.

The initial signs were innocent, almost whimsical. InfoCys specialized in deploying its elite experts—its 'fire-quenchers'—to client sites for short-term, high-impact projects. Chunmun's technical prowess made him the most frequently deputed. Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad—the tech hubs of India—were his usual haunts. Then came the international assignments: Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Sydney. Each new posting offered the promise of fresh, intriguing technical challenges, the dynamism of new teams, and the deep, silent satisfaction of a problem definitively solved.

Yet, irrespective of the city's climate or the client's industry, the curse manifested. She appeared. Tanu Sharma.

Not always the *exact* same woman, perhaps, but always bearing that infuriatingly common name, that distinctive face—a synthesis of sharp features and unshakeable confidence—and, most distressingly, that unrelenting, almost supernatural ability to metastasize his professional life into a labyrinthine nightmare of passive-aggression and psychological attrition.

At first, Chunmun had managed to keep the phenomenon light, a morbid inside joke he'd share over milky, spiced chai with trusted colleagues. "It's the Tanu Curse," he'd sigh, his eyes distant. "Like a bad penny, but with better eyeliner." The initial humor, however, had long since calcified into genuine fear as the encounters piled up with statistical improbability.

Each Tanu Sharma was a unique yet terrifying variant of the same core tormentor. They were uniformly sharp-tongued, masters of subtle manipulation, and inexplicably, maddeningly drawn to making his professional days as hellish as possible. His coping mechanism had evolved into obsessive pre-assignment rituals. He began demanding team rosters before accepting gigs, scrutinizing names, cross-referencing LinkedIn profiles, searching for that specific, cursed combination of syllables. But fate—or perhaps the truly indifferent, algorithmic cruelty of InfoCys' HR department—seemed determined to orchestrate their recurring collision.

This is the saga of Chunmun Singh's odyssey—not merely a catalogue of failed deployments, but a psychological novella detailing the intricacies of office intrigue, the bizarre landscape of unwanted advances, and the unbreakable, if beleaguered, spirit of a man who genuinely, passionately, and simply, just wanted to code in peace. His journey was a testament to the fact that sometimes, the most complex bug in a system isn't in the code, but in the human element.

His mind was already running through the possibilities for his next assignment. He visualized the sterile, fluorescent white light of a new office, the faint, metallic scent of newly manufactured cubicle walls, and the cacophony of a hundred keyboards—a blank canvas, he hoped, unmarred by the sickly yellow aura that always seemed

to follow his nemesis. He knew he needed to be faster, more elusive, but the dread of the inevitable encounter was a cold hand gripping his heart. He just needed to survive the next project. He needed to break the curse.

Chapter 1: The Sleeper in Silverman Sacks – Bangalore

Chunmun's first true immersion into the curse—the one that defined the pattern—occurred during a six-month deputation to Silverman Sacks, a behemoth of investment banking nestled within the sprawling, concrete expanse of Bangalore's Electronic City. The project was daunting, ambitious, and exactly the kind of high-stakes challenge Chunmun lived for: migrating their decades-old legacy trading systems onto a cutting-edge, cloud-based architecture.

He arrived on a muggy Monday, the air thick with the smell of dust and petrol mixed with the faint sweetness of jasmine blooming somewhere off-site. The office itself, however, was a hermetically sealed environment of corporate precision. The pervasive lighting was a harsh, unwavering blue-white fluorescent glare that seemed to drain the color from everything, mirroring the high-stress, high-stakes nature of the banking world. The dominant sound was a low, industrial hum—the combined noise of powerful air conditioning units struggling against the Indian heat and the steady, rhythmic click-clack of mechanical keyboards—a background drone that felt less like work and more like a monotonous, technological heartbeat.

Laptop bag slung over his shoulder, Chunmun stepped into the project bay, ready to dive into the technical deep end. His team

lead, a harried man named Suresh, performed the introductions with the speed of a man trying to beat a timer.

And then, she was there. Tanu Sharma.

She was a Senior Analyst, positioned near the window, almost bathed in the slightly filtered natural light which gave her an unfair, almost angelic golden-pink glow. She had sharp, arresting features, eyes dramatically lined with kohl that seemed to deepen their intensity, and an air of effortless entitlement that acted like an invisible force field. Her personal space was subtly perfumed with a heady, expensive scent of rich vanilla and sharp citrus, a jarring note against the office's sterility.

"Welcome, Chunmun," she said, her voice possessing a low, smoky quality—a sound that drew attention. The smile she offered was professionally perfect, but it didn't travel past her lips, failing to illuminate the calculating coldness in her eyes. "I'm Tanu. My husband is in the USA, so I'm here saving up for our dream home." It was a declaration, a statement of both ambition and perceived vulnerability, designed to immediately frame her presence in a relatable context.

For the first few weeks, the situation seemed deceptively normal. But soon, the patterns—the cursed patterns—began to emerge.

Tanu's dedication to her "dream home" was a twenty-four-hour commitment. She would spend her entire night on video calls with her husband across time zones, the muffled, tinny sound of American voices occasionally leaking from her headphones even during work hours. Consequently, she arrived at the office bleary-eyed, fueled only by massive cups of coffee, and utterly unproductive.