***MAROON (SAMPLE)***

*Ferraris parked in her lawn; her dinner plate full of expensive prawns*

*A strong fanbase and Europe's sweetheart as the nickname*

*Her life is full of fame*

*Gucci shoes to Gucci jeans, she has everything.*

*Yet what she craves for is permanent peace.*

*-Kusum Indoria(author)*

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***CHAPTER-1: WHEN PERMANENT PEACE DIED.***

"You feel the same way for me." He announced it out loud with his voice lathered with obviousness and clarity while my slit eyes saw his Gucci shoes marching towards me.

Gulping down saliva, I thought I could bolt in my insecurities too but my abnormally racing heart proved this instinct wrong. And, I stood restless- my hands behind the back, in my pizza delivery uniform stained with red chili sauce, waiting to be weakened by his selfish words dressed up as the kind. Remarkably complex?

Life is an archived file of complicated things.

He forwarded his hand adorned with dazzling diamond and gold rings and caressed my soft cheek as he stared my tired face with a glisten of solace and pity in his eyes, waiting to meet my poor teary gaze.

Jerking his hand off, I expressed anger with my narrowed eyes with a hope that he could feel the rare fire burning in them. "I don't feel that way." I asserted and waited for his usual angry outburst. Contrarily, all I did was keep waiting- he was a changed man today.

"I wasn't *asking* whether you do or not." He stopped and lifted up my chin. "I *said* you do."

He leaned forward and tilting his head to the left pressed his lips onto mine. His hands roamed behind my back leisurely, leaving a burning sensation on my covered skin. Immediate heavy breathing followed restlessness and I resolved to stop this for real because a few more minutes of tolerance would've cost me my life and career.

The swimming pool beside us came to my rescue and it didn't take me more than a second to consider before intentionally slipping on my stiletto heels and drowning in the light blue waters.

People encounter times where they initially decide to remain calm and determined to achieve their pre-planned goals and with all their might they stuck for seconds, minutes, hours but eventually give it up to their prolonged weakness- showcasing themselves as losers to the world when only they did was shush their vulnerability just in case it rebels to show up in front of the needy.

Trust me, being called a loser is far better than exposing your weak spots because the world can do nothing of you losing but can definitely stab you in your weakest spots. Competitive human nature, fellas.

I let my body voluntarily fall into the lovely waters without kicking my hands and legs or gasping for breath. The soothing coolness of the transparent blue waters caused tingles on my pale white skin that has been tortured by shooting under the blazing sun for hours.

The way they welcome me by wrapping themselves around me sinking all my worries is lovable, reminding me of my dead parents.

A feeble satisfying smile covered my face when I heard the director shouting "Cut!". This single word made it easier for my body to feel relaxed like an inflated balloon and I decided to thank my savior before resting my head on its lap- entering a peaceful world.

When I was a smart primary school student and my parents were still alive, I had a tough time being at home because my parents would often pick up a fight that would last for hours or sometimes days. The fight they started was like that of the premium quality subscription of Netflix; everything included- harassment, verbal abusing to taking out their outburst on the designer furniture and antique art pieces.

Divorce was not their thing because they said they couldn't bear to see me shed tears at their separation. But I would've been less hurt seeing them separate then look at the trash bin full of empty bottles of depressants.

Amidst their fights, I found peace in the shallow pool of our courtyard. As an adventurous swimmer, I loved experimenting with the waters and found a trick to remain peaceful while they fought- holding in my breath under the waters. Only cool waters: transparent and calm could soothe my young brain.

Sleeping underwater was one of my craziest fantasy and soon, I started sleeping under the cool, clear waters even it was for a mere minute- it became a habit.

While the parentlike waters whispered a silent lullaby to me, I heard people jumping one after another into the pool- possibly my angelic bodyguards' team. They called out my name in unison before reaching out to me and disturbing the inner peace that makes me accidentally chug a litre of the salty water.

Peace and I are like prohibited lovers- we meet only to be separated.

"Aster! Princess!" They shout trying to sound worried but they appear very coy to me.

Bodyguard Joe slapped my cheeks lightly. "Aster, C' mon! stop your act, I'll handle the rest." His whisper reached my ears but my body refused to react to his worried words and I forcibly blinked my eyes a bit- thinking that Joe could read them.

I tried hard to move my hand for tapping Joe's shoulder and tell him not to knit his eyebrows in distress because it's the only time when his young face looks unappealing. My breathing slows down despite my several attempts to keep it calm and the brain calls for a shutdown.

This was the first time I was entering a peaceful world unintentionally and it didn't feel right.

Mom already alarmed me about this situation a long time ago. It was an artistic winter evening- the pine trees in our courtyard were dressed up as snow-women, the coffee table and relaxing chairs played Snow-white dwarfs while the harsh wind blowing participated as the antagonist- driving the snow off them.

The sky was a hazy texture of orange and dusky blue and its uneven reflection ornamented the pool water which was chilling cold and decorated with snowflakes, hoarfrost and me.

Humans tend to lose themselves and overlook their existence when surrounded by things- beautiful and comforting. Nature's beauty can refresh procrastinators and put the workaholics to sleep- it is the most powerful and captivating of all.

But that day, I was lost in myself because my body was in contrast with the atmosphere- bright and delicate. It seemed like the dusky, rough evening envied my glow while the white snow shied away from my warm beige skin that shone like a golden treasure.

I chuckled at that thought terming it as self-obsessed and mean. Yet it felt genuine. Though darker than the snow but beauty was all about power and captivation, not colour so I was the most beautiful.

It was going to be a peaceful day well spent in the waters until I heard someone shout. It was Mom. And I was doomed.

She was terrified thinking my young brain had started developing suicidal thoughts so I told her about my secret world to calm her down but instead, I saw her going mute for a minute then breaking out like never before. "Aster, baby. Mumma is sorry!" She apologized, blowing warm air into my cold hands.

"Temporary peace will ask for a permanent price one day."

"Not every parent can be their child's idol." She told me hinting her habit of taking depressants to relieve stress.

It was that artistic evening when I first experienced permanent peace - in my mother's lap surrounded by togetherness and solace. But it was only for that night when I found the cool waters boring.

Mom and dad died the next day. And my one-day-old permanent peace died too.

This was on that gloomy day when he first entered my life.

"He is not meant to be remembered."