



**GOOD MORNING
SHER/SHERNIYO !**

103 DAYS LEFT !!

**AAJ NEW CHAPTER START HOGA AMBITION MEIN -
TENSE !!**

KUCH B HO JAYE YEH MISS MAT KARNA AT 2PM !!

IT IS SUPER SUPER IMPORTANT !!

AAJ SE 5 DAYS MEIN SUNDAY HAI !!

**US DIN KRNA AARAM BAS ABI 5 DIN ACHE SE PADH
LO**

The first time the five of them sat together on the crumbling boundary wall of their government school, their legs swinging above the dust that rose each time a bicycle passed, there had been nothing ominous about the laughter they shared, nothing in the easy familiarity of their voices that suggested how quietly, almost imperceptibly, one among them would begin to corrode the others like a slow, undetected poison seeping through the veins of trust and youth, and yet if one were to return to that afternoon with

the burden of hindsight, one might notice the way Anumay's eyes lingered too long on appearances, on the polished watch of a passing stranger, on the admiration in the glances of girls crossing the road, as though he had already begun measuring life not in substance but in spectacle, while Mangal and Shubham leaned closer to him, drawn by the magnetism of his confidence, whereas Rohit and Krishnan, though equally fond of him, watched with a certain quiet reservation they themselves could not articulate, an unease that felt almost disloyal to acknowledge at such a tender age, and so they buried it beneath camaraderie, believing perhaps that time would shape them all into better men, not knowing that time, when left to the influence of the wrong hand, often distorts rather than refines. Years passed with the

deceptive swiftness of youth, and the five boys carried their friendship into college, where the boundaries of freedom expanded and so did the shadows of their choices, and it was here that Anumay's philosophy of life—if it could be called that—began to manifest with an almost theatrical audacity; he spoke of success not as a culmination of discipline or perseverance but as an illusion that could be curated through borrowed money, expensive clothes, and fleeting conquests, and there was something dangerously seductive in the way he dismissed conventional struggles, laughing at the idea of long hours of study or the humility of starting small, as though ambition itself were a weakness reserved for the ordinary, while he, in his self-fashioned grandeur, was destined to leap directly into

admiration without enduring the labor that sustains it, and Mangal and Shubham, whose own uncertainties about their place in the world made them vulnerable to such narratives, began to orbit around him with increasing devotion, adopting his habits with a reckless eagerness that neither of them fully understood, smoking their first cigarettes not out of desire but out of a need to belong, drinking their first glasses not for taste but for validation, and gradually reshaping their identities into distorted reflections of Anumay's hollow charisma. Rohit and Krishnan watched this transformation with a growing disquiet, their attempts at gentle persuasion often dissolving into awkward silences, for friendship has its own fragile boundaries, and to question a man's choices is often to risk losing him entirely, yet the distance between

them widened not through conflict but through divergence, as Rohit immersed himself in the quiet rigor of preparation for competitive exams, and Krishnan found solace in a new circle of friends who spoke less of appearances and more of purpose, while Mangal and Shubham drifted further into Anumay's orbit, convinced that the life he displayed—full of parties, borrowed luxuries, and endless conversations with women that never deepened into anything real—was the very embodiment of success. For a brief period, it seemed as though Anumay's illusion might sustain itself indefinitely, for he secured a position as a salesperson, and with it came a steady income that allowed him to amplify his facade, to indulge in greater extravagances, to present himself as a man who had outpaced the slow,

laborious journeys of his friends, and it was during this fragile peak that he married Pooja, a woman whose initial admiration for his confidence slowly gave way to a disquiet she could neither ignore nor suppress, for beneath the surface charm she began to perceive an alarming absence of direction, an inertia disguised as contentment, and conversations that should have been about building a future instead circled endlessly around the present, around the next purchase, the next display, the next fleeting pleasure, until the realization settled upon her with a quiet, devastating clarity that she had not married a man but a performance, and that performances, no matter how convincing, cannot sustain the weight of real life. Meanwhile, the cracks in Anumay's professional life began to widen, his reputation within the

company deteriorating as his inability to align with the team became increasingly apparent, his initial sales successes dwindling as clients sensed the superficiality of his engagement, and one by one, the opportunities that had once seemed abundant began to vanish, until he found himself dismissed with a finality that echoed the very carelessness with which he had treated his responsibilities, and it was then, in the stark absence of income and admiration, that the fragility of his constructed life became undeniable, yet even in this moment of reckoning, he lacked the introspection to confront his failures, choosing instead to deflect, to blame circumstances, to cling to the remnants of his former persona as though acknowledging the truth would annihilate him entirely. Mangal and Shubham, who had tethered their

identities so closely to his, found themselves adrift in the aftermath, burdened with debts incurred in the pursuit of a lifestyle that had never truly been theirs, their health compromised by habits they had once believed to be symbols of freedom, and their emotional lives reduced to a series of superficial interactions that left them increasingly hollow, for they had spent years chasing connections that required no depth, and now, when the time came to seek something real, they found themselves incapable of sustaining it, their attempts at relationships faltering under the weight of their own immaturity, until the prospect of marriage, which once seemed distant and irrelevant, became an unspoken void they could not fill. Anumay's own marriage unraveled with a quiet inevitability, Pooja's patience eroded by the relentless realization that

she had anchored her life to a man unwilling to evolve, and when she finally left, it was not with anger but with a weary resignation that spoke of dreams deferred and dignity reclaimed, leaving Anumay alone with the echoes of a life he had never truly built. Three years passed in this slow, unrelenting decline, and the once vibrant group of five was reduced to a fractured memory, with Anumay, Mangal, and Shubham entangled in a cycle of stagnation and regret, their conversations now devoid of the laughter that had once defined them, replaced instead by a quiet bitterness that they seldom acknowledged but could never escape, while Rohit and Krishnan, having distanced themselves early enough to preserve their sense of purpose, found themselves on steadier ground, their lives shaped not by spectacle but by

substance, their friendships rooted in mutual growth rather than mutual escape, and though they occasionally thought of the friends they had lost—not to death but to choices—they understood with a clarity born of experience that not all bonds are meant to endure, that sometimes the most necessary act of preservation is to walk away, and that the ruin of a group is rarely sudden or dramatic but unfolds in the subtle, cumulative influence of a single misguided soul, whose greatest tragedy is not merely the damage he inflicts on others, but the quiet, irreversible erosion of his own life.

1. Ominous – giving warning of danger
2. Imperceptibly – very slightly, not easily noticed

3. Corrode – gradually destroy
4. Hindsight – understanding after event
5. Superficial – shallow, not deep
6. Spectacle – showy display
7. Magnetism – attractive quality
8. Articulate – express clearly
9. Comradery (Camaraderie) – mutual trust
10. Deceptive – misleading
11. Manifest – become clear
12. Audacity – boldness
13. Seductive – tempting, attractive
14. Conventional – traditional
15. Perseverance – continued effort
16. Distort – twist out of shape
17. Vulnerable – easily influenced
18. Validation – approval
19. Disquiet – uneasiness

20. Divergence – separation in direction
21. Rigour – strict discipline
22. Solace – comfort
23. Fragile – easily broken
24. Extravagance – excessive spending
25. Facade – false appearance
26. Inevitability – certainty of happening
27. Introspection – self-examination
28. Deflect – shift blame
29. Aftermath – result of event
30. Stagnation – lack of growth
31. Superficiality – shallowness
32. Maturity – emotional development
33. Resignation – acceptance of failure
34. Dignity – self-respect
35. Erode – gradually weaken

36. Substance – real worth
37. Preservation – protection
38. Cumulative – increasing over time
39. Misguided – wrongly directed
40. Irreversible – cannot be undone

