

**STORY TO READ – 26**

**SEPTEMBER 2025**

## **The Mirage of Speed**

### **1. Roots in Haryana**

Kartik grew up in a small town in Hisar, Haryana. a boy always known for his sharp mind and ambition. From the first day he picked up his schoolbooks, he was different. His teachers often said, “This boy doesn’t just study, he imagines his future.” And indeed, Kartik always dreamed of something bigger than a salaried

job. He wanted to create, to lead, to build a business empire of his own. Part of this dream came from his maternal uncle, Shubhash Mehra, who had moved to Dubai decades earlier. Shubhash was a name that carried weight in the extended family. Every time he returned to India during festivals, his gold watch gleamed, his clothes carried foreign brands, and his stories painted Dubai as a land of endless opportunity. Kartik listened wide-eyed: skyscrapers taller than imagination, salaries that dwarfed Indian paychecks, lifestyles filled

with cars, villas, and shopping malls.

Kartik told himself, *One day, I'll be there too. One day, I won't just follow — I'll build my own empire like Mama ji.*

## **2. The Leap to Dubai**

After finishing college with top marks, Kartik announced to his parents that he wasn't interested in a regular government or corporate job. Instead, he wanted to start a business — and to learn, he would go to Dubai under the guidance of his uncle.

His parents were hesitant. His father muttered, “A stable job in India is better than chasing shadows abroad.” But Kartik’s mother, proud of her brother’s success, convinced the family: “Let the boy fly. Shubhash bhaiya will take care of him.”

And so, Kartik landed in Dubai—city of glass towers, clean highways, and desert horizons. The first sight of Burj Khalifa piercing the clouds filled him with awe. He thought, *Yes, this is where I belong. Haryana looks so small compared to this.*

### **3. Comfort Through His Uncle**

Shubhash Mehra kept his word. He arranged for Kartik to stay in a neat two-bedroom flat in Karama, one of the buzzing Indian hubs of Dubai. He even pulled some strings to get Kartik a desk job in a trading company. The salary wasn't extraordinary by Dubai standards, but by Indian standards, it was enough to live comfortably.

Kartik quickly noticed the differences: metro trains arriving on the dot, streets free of garbage, the shine of malls like Dubai Mall and Mall of the Emirates, the glamour of sports cars that zoomed past his taxi

rides. He compared everything with India—roads, weather, jobs, salaries—and every time, Dubai won in his eyes.

Shubhash advised him, “Beta, live simply, work steadily, and learn how business runs. Patience is everything here.”

But patience was never Kartik’s strength.

#### **4. Friends and New Company**

In the first few months, Kartik made two close friends.

One was Dinesh, an English teacher at a private school. Dinesh was mild-mannered, always quoting

Shakespeare, always emphasizing values of honesty. He often told Kartik, “You’re too restless. Dubai rewards patience. Remember that.”

The second was Manu, a salesperson at a travel agency. Outgoing and street-smart, Manu loved closing deals and making commissions. He often bragged, “Here in Dubai, you can double your income if you have the guts to take risks.”

Kartik felt Manu spoke his language more than Dinesh did.

## **5. Love in a Gujarati Kitchen**

Meanwhile, Kartik's girlfriend Riya had also come to Dubai on a student visa. She was pursuing her culinary diploma and working part-time as a junior chef in a prominent Gujarati restaurant in Bur Dubai. She would return home late, her hands tired from chopping, frying, cleaning, and repeating the cycle.

Kartik loved her but secretly disapproved of her work. In his Indian-bred mentality, he thought, *Cooking in a restaurant kitchen is not respectable. It's labour, not a career.*

Riya, however, defended herself: "At least I'm learning a craft, Kartik.

Someday, I'll open my own restaurant. Hard work is dignity.”

But Kartik dismissed it. To him, respect was linked to luxury, not sweat.

## **6. The Mirage of Luxury**

Though Kartik's salary covered his needs, he wasn't satisfied. He compared his modest apartment to the sprawling villas he passed in Jumeirah. He scrolled through property ads and luxury car websites, dreaming.

To impress Riya and his friends, he often stretched his wallet—dinners in fancy places, shopping for

branded clothes, renting sports cars for weekends. Everyone thought Kartik was doing exceptionally well. Inside, however, his bank account was thinning.

That's when Manu whispered one evening, "Why not play the banks, yaar? People here take loans and flip properties. You can buy a big house, rent out rooms, and show the world who you are."

The idea gripped Kartik like fire. He remembered his uncle's villa and thought, *Why should I wait decades? I'll do it now.*

## **7. The Fraudulent Leap**

Kartik manipulated documents with the help of some shady agents. He inflated his salary slips, created false bank statements, and managed to secure a massive loan. With that, he purchased a grand 5-bedroom mansion on the outskirts of Dubai. It was a palace compared to his flat. Marble floors, chandeliers, balconies overlooking the skyline—Kartik walked through its halls feeling like a king. He quickly moved in with Riya. To ease expenses, he invited Dinesh and Manu to stay as paying tenants.

“See,” he boasted to Riya, “now we live like royalty. This is the life we deserve.”

Riya, however, was uneasy. She asked, “But how will you pay back such a big loan?”

Kartik waved her off. “Don’t worry. Rent will cover it. And soon, I’ll start my own company. Money will flow.”

## **8. Cracks in the Dream**

For a few months, things seemed perfect. Parties at the mansion, selfies by the pool, friends admiring his “success.” Kartik posted

pictures online, making relatives in Haryana swell with pride.

But soon, reality struck. The rent from Dinesh and Manu wasn't enough to cover even a fraction of the mortgage. Riya's part-time income barely handled groceries. On top of that, property prices dipped, and tenants were scarce. Banks began calling.

Dinesh noticed the tension. "Kartik, this isn't sustainable. You've built a castle on sand."

Manu, though less cautious, also admitted, "Bro, maybe we jumped too fast. This market is tough."

Kartik grew irritable. His dream mansion became a prison of unpaid bills.

## **9. The Fall**

Within a year, Kartik defaulted. The bank issued warnings, then legal notices. One evening, officials came to seal the property. Watching strangers walk through his mansion, Kartik felt the world collapsing.

Riya stood silently, her apron still on from work, eyes full of disappointment. “You wanted shortcuts. Look where it has brought us.”

With mounting debt and no credibility left, Kartik had no choice but to leave Dubai. Shubhash Mehra, though pained, refused to bail him out. “I told you, beta, patience is the key. You didn’t listen.”

## **10. Return to India**

Kartik returned to Haryana, his suitcase lighter than when he had first left. Neighbours whispered—once the topper with big dreams, now back with empty hands.

At first, shame consumed him. He avoided relatives, avoided friends, even avoided Riya, who chose to

stay in Dubai and continue her culinary journey.

But slowly, as months passed, Kartik began to reflect. He realized he had equated respect with luxury, love with material proof, and success with speed. He had forgotten the very lessons his uncle and even Dinesh had tried to remind him of—patience, steady growth, and the dignity of honest work.

## **11. A New Beginning**

With time, Kartik started again—this time small. He joined a local trading business in Haryana,

learning properly. Instead of chasing shortcuts, he saved bit by bit.

He often remembered Riya sweating in the restaurant kitchen. Now he saw the respect in such work—dignity born of effort, not display.

Years later, when he finally opened his own modest business, he chose a name that reminded him of his fall: **“Mirage Enterprises.”** Whenever people asked why, he explained, “Because speed without patience is a mirage. You think it’s real, but it vanishes before you reach it.”

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## **Moral**

Kartik's journey showed that shortcuts may glitter like Dubai's skyline, but they are hollow without patience. True success is not in pretending to be big overnight, but in growing steadily with honesty and respect. The story ends with a simple truth:

**Great empires are not built in a day. They are built brick by brick, with patience, perseverance, and humility.**

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