

Letters in the Rain

It was always raining in Darjeeling-or at least that's how Aarav remembered it. He had moved there from Delhi, chasing peace after losing his father. His world had become quiet, filled only with the hum of his camera and the patter of raindrops on his rooftop.

Then came Aisha.

She worked at the bookstore down the lane-a girl who smelled like old paperbacks and freshly brewed tea. She didn't talk much either, but her eyes? They told stories Aarav had never read. He started visiting the shop every Sunday. Not for books-but to see her gently tuck her hair behind her ears while she arranged the shelves.

They never exchanged numbers, never went for coffee. Instead, they began something old-fashioned. Handwritten letters.

Aarav would leave his letter inside the pages of a poetry book. Aisha would find it, read it, smile softly, and reply in a novel tucked on the next shelf. Each letter was simple-sometimes a quote, sometimes a memory. They shared fears, dreams, the pain of loss, and the joy of little things.

He once wrote:

"I don't know what this is, but I've started looking forward to Sundays in a way I never did before."

She replied:

"Love doesn't always need loud declarations. Sometimes, it hides in ink stains and bookmarks."

Months passed. Their bond deepened, stitched together by words never spoken aloud. One Sunday, the bookstore remained closed. Aarav waited in the rain, a letter in his pocket. But she never came.

The shop stayed shut for three weeks. Aarav, restless and worried, finally asked the tea seller next door.

"She left for Mumbai. Her father fell sick. Might not return soon," he said.

Aarav felt a strange emptiness. He never got to say goodbye. Or even hello properly. That evening, he walked to the bookstore and slid one last letter under the door.

"If this was love, thank you for letting me feel it in the quietest way possible. If you ever return, I'll still come on Sundays, just in case."

Two months later, a monsoon Sunday arrived. Aarav, out of habit, strolled past the store. And there she was.

Soaked in rain, holding a letter. His letter.

"I never liked phones," she said softly. "But I liked you."

Aarav smiled. "Still hiding feelings in fiction?"

She nodded. "Maybe. But this time, I want the next chapter to be real."

They stood under the same awning where it all began, rain still falling, but this time-it felt like a blessing.

Because some love stories don't need grand gestures. Just words, rain, and someone who listens quietly between the lines.