

Chapter 2

Jack was lost deep in thoughts. He had known Spencer as one of the most dynamic individuals at the University campus. He was a doctoral student of Psychology when she had joined as a junior lecturer in the Department of Economics. Within a month of her joining, she had become the talk of the campus. Students or staff all had something very positive to say about her. Later during the year when he had the opportunity to meet her in person for his research, he had taken an instant liking for her. He had found her enthusiasm almost infectious.

His work was mainly on the effect of the essentials of Human Psychology. When he needed to develop the concept of effect of economic changes at Global level on individual psychology, he had sought Spencer's help. She was not only willing, but also enthused as if it was her own project. Rather than guiding him to some reference material, she accompanied him to the library and spent over good three hours till she was satisfied that he was ready to start on his own.

All through the project, she provided him with more support than he was expecting. One Friday afternoon, he remembered now, he had sought her appointment for some last minute help. He wanted to get some clarification so that he could continue with his research over the weekend. Spencer had been occupied, but she promised to see him for half an hour before she left for the day. As it turned out, she spent the entire evening with him not ready to call it a day before she was sure that his query was fully resolved.

He glanced at Spencer. She seemed... lost. There was nothing to tell about the Spencer he had known. Though Jack had been impressed by her excellent grasp of

the subject and the knack at interdisciplinary approach to the study, he would have been blind if he had failed to notice her charm and beauty. Slim and tall with the most innocent eyes and attractive features, fitted in simple but elegant business suits, she surely had been a treat to the eyes. He had been dating Grace then and though she was mature and balanced, his eyes were able to catch a glimpse of envy in her eyes whenever he spoke of Spencer. A small smile formed on his lips.

When he was finally done with the research, he had invited Spencer over for dinner with him and Grace. After the introductions, Grace had finally confided in Spencer that she had been envious of her but that it would have been so with anyone who was around Spencer.

Jack caught Spencer wiping her tears through the corner of his eyes. She was pale, had put on some weight, but was certainly not overweight. Hair tied up unkemptly, and what she wore certainly did not flaunt her figure, but the most disturbing thing was that it seemed as if she did not care anymore. She had been out when he spotted her and she had not bothered to straighten herself up before leaving the house. What had happened?

There had been a long gap since he left the University soon after his doctoral degree. Very soon he was married to Grace and both of them had been travelling extensively to get practical experience in understanding the human mind-sets in various cultural, religious, economical and geographic situations. He made hundreds of presentations, met experts and noble laureates, had extensive sessions with the common man and had amassed wide experience in the real sense. Finally, when their second daughter was on way, they decided to settle down, have a consultancy and put all the knowledge and experience, they had gathered, to good

use. London had been hometown to both of them and hence it was the obvious choice.

He looked at Spencer again. It had been almost 10 years since University. “There would be a lot to catch up on”, he thought as he pulled up outside his consultancy “But what could have gone so wrong in just five years?” He remembered a happy Ron at the hospital when Grace had delivered Annabelle. They had managed to exchange pleasantries, but he could not meet Spencer as she was in labor. The nurse had summoned Ron and they had departed. Soon after, Jack had resumed the last lap of his tours and Grace had joined him with one-month-old Annabelle.

Jack opened the passenger door and held it for Spencer. She looked up in a daze, “Wha...where are we? Why have you brought me here?”

“Relax Spencer. This is my consultancy, you can relax in here till you feel well enough to go back, perhaps you would like to talk”.

“This is really not necessary Jack. I am okay, really... I am fine. It is just that I was caught up in some emotions... there is nothing that needs to be talked about...” she babbled on, half in embarrassment.

“So we don’t talk, that’s okay. Just rest for a little while and you can be on your way.” Jack held out his hand with a kind smile.

Spencer took it hesitantly, avoiding his eyes, and got down. She lingered by the car for one long moment. This looked like Waltham stow. She had been here once with her mother in law when she was shopping for her new home. But she had not

noticed any familiar names around here that time. She looked at Jack who gestured towards an office ten feet away and started walking. Nearing the door, Spencer lingered again reading the plaque, 'Jack Webbers, Consultant Psychologist', and another one just below it, 'Grace Lou Webbers, Family Counselor'. Jack led her inside by her arm. She instantly felt warm and cozy. It was a small but tastefully done office, the ambience well suited for his work, to soothe the disturbed and troubled souls.

They were greeted by a heavily set, yet rather charming elderly lady with pristine white hair and a motherly smile. "Judy this is my dear friend Spencer Mc'nero".

Spencer could only nod vaguely to the welcoming smile.

"In this office", Jack continued, "People feel better and cured just as they talk to Judy, so in a way I would say she is responsible for my practice not doing well". Jack looked at Judy with an affectionate smile.

Judy in turn patted his arm and said, "Don't pay any attention to him lady, he is a bundle of humility. God knows what tough time I have refusing appointments from all those not willing to see any other consultant since he is in town." For a moment Spencer could feel the warmth between them.

The stress and crying took their toll, she felt dizzy. It was Judy who noticed the twist on her face and the sudden pallor. "Are you not well Mrs. Mc'Nero?" She asked Spencer as she put her arm around her waist and led her inside the office while Jack held the door for them. Together they led her to the couch. While Jack was helping her on the couch, Judy was ready with a glass of water. The cold

sensation travelling down her throat made her feel better. All the crying had parched her throat. She slumped on the large couch and closed her eyes.

It was a desert or a jungle? No, a desert with some bushes here and there, she was sitting in the middle of nowhere feeling absolutely lost. For a moment her kids were near her and the next moment she was frantically searching for them. She was in a large office with people working around her efficiently and moments later she was sitting in the dessert again trying to remember who she was. Then Ron embraced her from behind and she experienced a mixture of relief, ecstasy and panic and as she opened her mouth to tell him about the missing kids, he was gone. She panicked and looked around frantically for him, she screamed to call out for him...

“Spencer... are you okay? Spencer wake up! We will call Ron, okay? Can you give me his number?” A worried Jack was looking into her face.

“He is gone Jack, he will never come back, Ron is gone”. She burst into tears saying something incoherent that Jack could not decipher. He continued to hold her till she began to calm down.

Using the tissue given by Jack, Spencer wiped off the remaining tears. She looked straight into his eyes, “It’s been three years Jack, Ron died in a car accident.”

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