



The Valentine's Blessing

Snehal Sarda



The bustling Esamiya Bazaar bursts with life! Brightly colored dupattas flutter from shop fronts, bangles glitter, and vendors call out their prices. Snehal and Rani, two best friends, navigate the lively crowd, their eyes sparkling with determination.



Rani dramatically throws her hands up, complaining, "Nothing is unique!" Snehal, ever calm and patient, smiles reassuringly, "Wait... we'll find something." They walk shoulder to shoulder, like serious fashion critics on a treasure hunt.



Suddenly, a slightly confused elderly gentleman on a vintage scooter slows down beside them. He looks around, his brow furrowed, clearly lost in the maze of the market. He's dignified and gentle, but a little stressed.



Without a moment's hesitation, Snehal steps forward. Helping people is just who she is, a natural instinct. Rani watches, surprised but not unfamiliar with her friend's quick compassion.



In clear, confident Telugu, Snehal explains the directions to the bank. Her instructions are precise, simple, and delivered with a warm smile. The uncle listens intently, his confusion slowly melting away.



The elderly gentleman's face transforms from bewilderment to relief, then to a look of deep admiration. He adjusts his glasses, absorbing every word of Snehal's helpful guidance. A sense of calm washes over him.



He starts his scooter, then pauses, looking back at Snehal. A wide, genuine smile spreads across his face – the kind that radiates heartfelt gratitude. It’s a moment of pure, unexpected connection.



Then, with a twinkle in his eye, he declares, "I Love You!" and drives off into the bustling bazaar. Snehal and Rani are left in stunned silence, their mouths slightly agape.



For two seconds, the world stops. Then, Rani bursts into peals of laughter, holding her stomach. Snehal stands there, a delightful mix of shock, embarrassment, and amusement coloring her cheeks.



Years later, on Valentine's Day, Rani's WhatsApp message pops up: "Happy Valentine's Day... I Love You from that uncle 😂!" Snehal smiles, remembering the laughter, the street, the scooter, and the spontaneous blessing of kindness.