



Malu and the Mysterious Neighbor

Vishnuyan VT



The warm afternoon sun streamed into Malu's room as she happily unpacked her bags. After a long semester of studying, being home for the holidays felt like a dream. She stretched her arms high, a wide, joyful smile spreading across her face, ready for some much-needed relaxation.



Later, Malu chatted with her mom in the cozy living room, sipping on a glass of fresh juice. "Mom, I noticed a moving truck next door," Malu said, a curious tilt to her head. Her mom nodded, a knowing look in her eyes, confirming the arrival of new residents.



Suddenly, Grandma, with her usual spirited entrance, chimed in, excitedly describing the new family. She painted a vivid picture of the handsome eldest son, Kashyap, praising his looks like a Korean drama star, even mentioning his inability to speak. Malu's eyes widened, a flicker of intrigue sparking within her.



Malu excused herself and went to her room, her mind buzzing with Grandma's colorful description. A handsome, tall, silent boy? It sounded like something out of a movie. She couldn't help but feel a flutter of curiosity, despite her mom's slightly skeptical glance.



Peeking out her window, Malu gazed at the neighbor's house, a grand structure with neatly trimmed bushes. The house looked quiet and still, no sign of the mysterious Kashyap. She wondered what kind of person he was, her imagination running wild with possibilities.



Just as Malu was about to turn away, a light flickered on in the window directly opposite hers. Her heart gave a little jump as a tall, elegant silhouette appeared. It was him – Kashyap – moving gracefully around his brightly lit room, completely unaware he was being watched.



Malu found herself mesmerized, unable to tear her eyes away. Kashyap moved with a quiet confidence, his figure striking even from a distance. She watched him, captivated by his every subtle movement, a blush creeping up her cheeks.



Then, to Malu's complete surprise, Kashyap reached for his shirt, beginning to pull it over his head. Her eyes widened in a comical gasp, and she instinctively ducked behind the curtain, her face turning a bright shade of cherry red, a playful shyness washing over her.



After a moment, Malu bravely peeked out again. Kashyap had finished changing and was now looking towards her window, a soft light reflecting in his eyes. He didn't seem to see her, but the brief, almost-connection sent a thrill through Malu.



Malu pulled back from the window, her heart doing a happy little dance, a silly, hopeful smile gracing her lips. She couldn't wait to meet this intriguing new neighbor. The holidays, she realized, were going to be far more exciting than she had ever imagined.