Beyond the Bus Stand

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It was a warm afternoon in early 2021 when Maya stood at the bus stand with her friend Ria, chatting away as they always did. Suddenly, her gaze locked with a boy sitting in the very back seat of Ria's bus, and for a moment, the world around them seemed to blur into a magical haze.

The connection was so intense that Maya found herself unable to look away, feeling completely lost in that single moment of eye contact. Even as the bus pulled away and Ria waved goodbye, the image of his face remained etched in Maya's mind, haunting the blank walls of her room that evening.

Just as Maya began searching for him the next day, the world changed as the second wave of the pandemic triggered a strict three-month lockdown. Stuck at home, she spent her days manifesting a reunion, talking to her garden plants and dreaming of the mystery boy she barely knew.

One afternoon during the lockdown, Maya wandered over to her cousin's house in their quiet neighborhood and witnessed a car pulling up to a vacant plot nearby. Her heart skipped a beat when she saw the same boy from the bus get out of the car; his family was moving in right next door.

As the weeks passed, the two families grew close, and Maya's brother became fast friends with the boy, whose name was revealed during their afternoon games. Maya watched from the porch, her stomach full of butterflies, trying her best to act casual whenever he looked her way.

The friendship moved to the digital world when they finally exchanged Instagram handles and began a whirlwind of late-night chats and meme-sharing. Through glowing screens, they shared their secrets and flirted playfully, building a bond that felt deeper than just a neighborhood crush.

When schools finally reopened, Maya discovered he attended the rival high school nearby, and they began crossing paths at the bus shelter every morning. She soon realized he wasn't just there by coincidence; he was waiting specifically for her so they could walk and travel together.

Their connection deepened into a brief, sweet romance, but the happiness was cut short when Maya's best friend intervened and caused a painful rift. Though her heart was heavy, Maya stepped back, watching from a distance as complications and misunderstandings pulled them apart.

Months later, the truth came to light about the betrayal that had ended their early spark, leaving the boy single once again. Maya remained a steady, supportive friend, but she never truly lost the feeling that had started with that first look at the bus stand.

On his birthday, Maya decided to take a leap of faith and posted a flirty, mysterious tribute to him on her social media story. When he reached out, curious and intrigued, Maya finally found the words to confess the feelings she had carried since that magical afternoon in 2021.