

THE HEART TO SEEK *PART II*

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

SHUSHINDREN



Disclaimer

I have changed some names to protect individuals' privacy. To maintain the anonymity of individuals involved, I have changed some details. There are my memories, from my perspective, and I have tried to represent events as faithfully as possible.

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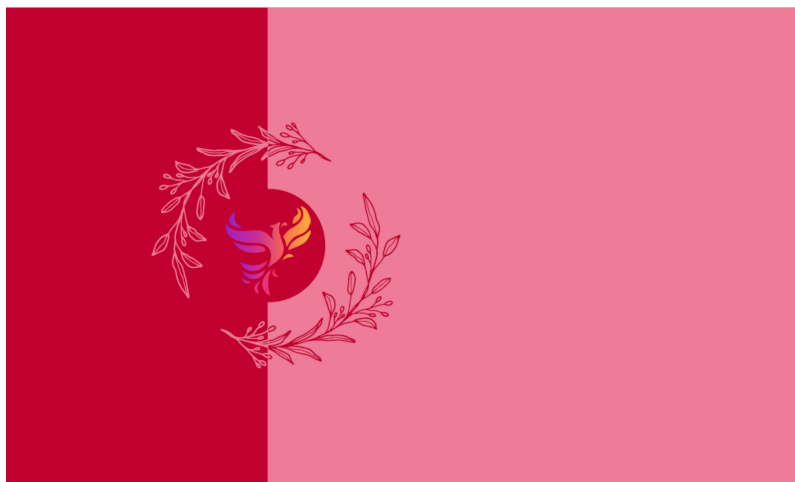
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"Respect and faith birth a heart for true love"

Shushindren

Dedicated to all souls who strive for true
love.

DATTEBAYO FLAG



DATTEBAYO MAP



CHAPTER ONE

JUSTICE FOR LOVE

As I tossed the brass coin, memories of Angel and me flooded my mind. Marking one side of the coin with 'yes' and the other with 'no', I deliberated whether to see her through a toss of the coin. It was a 'yes'. Finally, I suggested meeting up for a dinner at a shopping mall on 1st June. Angel agreed but highlighted that she would need to be home early due to her parents' curfew. Her tone raised doubts about her level of interest in me and I felt somewhat estranged. Nonetheless, I remained steadfast in my determination to fight for our love. Things would remain stagnant if I were to do nothing. She planned to meet me after work, and would head to the mall via the train as her car was still undergoing repairs.

In the meantime, I had booked a nearby hotel for the night. As the day of our meet-up approached, I couldn't shake off the nervousness. I contemplated how to convey my sincerity and loyalty and regain her trust. I had to choose my words carefully. I wished I had my car to pick her up and drive us to our familiar spot in the basement parking. I would not have my car with me as I didn't tell my parents about my visit to spare them from unnecessary worry. I must salvage my relationship with Angel at any cost. For our outing, I was planning to bring her to the cinema within the mall, a place where we could connect with some privacy and little disturbances if I were to choose an underrated movie. Based on my past experiences, the crowd was usually smaller for the less popular films. Despite her time constraints, I managed to book the tickets to a two-hour underrated movie, creating an opportunity for us to connect.

I prepared my scrapbook which was filled with heartfelt writing expressing my affection for her. I also

had with me a gemstone ring which was gifted by her in the past for good fortune. I gently wrapped the book and gemstone ring together in a nice gift bag. As a testament to my enduring love for her, I hoped that they would touch her heart and reignite her belief in true love once again. On 1st June, I embarked on the journey from Singapore to Ai and eventually to Anbu. I arrived at the mall early in the evening and waited for her anxiously. I texted her to say that I had arrived, and she replied that she was on her way and would be reaching in a couple of minutes. Glancing at my watch, my anxiety grew, my palms becoming sweaty as if I was going to meet a stranger. Spotting her from afar, a smile graced my lips as she walked towards the mall. I hurried towards her with the urge to hug her, but I had to control myself. As I moved closer, I noticed she was engrossed in a phone call. Assuming it was with her mother based on what I had overheard, I waited patiently until she ended the call and noticed me. After exchanging greetings, I shared that I was glad to see her again. She was quiet, holding a few

bags that contained her lunch boxes and items from her workplace. Revealing that I had a surprise planned, I told her that I had booked a movie for us, hoping it would provide a quiet space for us to chill and talk. Though she didn't anticipate it, she went along with it since the tickets were already booked.

Entering the cinema, I guided her to our seats and helped her with her bags. I was surprised that there were more audience than expected. Fortunately, I had booked corner seats which would allow some privacy. Handing her the gift bag, I expressed my profound love for her and my desire to continue the relationship with her. I explained that the book contained my thoughts, insecurities, struggles and how much I missed her during the period when she distanced herself from me. I added that the gemstone ring which she had given me in the past was treasured till today, a testament to my commitment to her. Lastly, I expressed my willingness to do whatever it takes to salvage our relationship, emphasising that I'm ready to put in the effort as long

as she was willing to work with me. However, our moment was interrupted by a fellow moviegoer, who told us to lower down our voices or head outside if we wished to continue talking. Apologising for disturbing his movie experience, we agreed to speak quietly. Angel's mood changed and she appeared frustrated, placing her hand on her forehead as if she was having a headache. Concerned for her well-being, I attempted to hold her hand to offer comfort, but she seemed reluctant to accept it, withdrawing her hand. She crossed her arms, refusing to give me her hand. She remained stiff throughout the movie, like a statue, avoiding eye contact or turning towards me. I tried to hold her hand several times, but she showed no inclination to reciprocate. Feeling hurt and offended by her contrasting behaviour, I suggested leaving the cinema. I could sense that she was not appreciative of my presence, making me feel like an outcast.

We stepped outside and settled on a nearby bench. With a heavy heart, I asked why she had changed

so drastically and whether I meant anything to her. I probed into her reason for treating me like a stranger, disregarding my feelings. In a fit of anger, she accused me of never understanding her, insisting that everything always revolved around me. She expressed frustration over my habit of making decisions without consulting her. For instance, I booked the movie tickets without asking her beforehand. She repeatedly labelled me as a self-centred and stubborn person who never listen to her and always make things worse. As she threw these words at me, I did not make eye contact with her. Soon, tears blurred my vision. Emotionless and cold-hearted, she said that my reaction was guilt tripping her. Staring blankly at the guardrail lining the parameters of the floor we were at, thoughts of ending the misery crossed my mind; perhaps I should walk towards the guardrail, jump over it, and end the pain I was enduring. I felt helpless as my plans for the evening had spiralled out of control. I explained that all my actions were efforts made to fix our relationship by adding elements of surprise, but they fell on deaf

ears. Minutes passed in silence, tears streaming down my face uncontrollably. She watched me silently. We descended to the lower floor as she needed to leave. Offering to carry her bags to ease her burden, I tried to show my concern. She called her father to pick her up, seemingly indifferent to my distress.

When her father confirmed his arrival, she urged me to leave, saying her goodbyes. Feeling abandoned, I pleaded with her to stay so that we could talk it out, but she remained resolute in her decision to leave me behind. As I felt betrayed by the soul I loved the most who had backstabbed me for her own priorities and feelings, I banged the glass wall right beside me in anger. In spite of seeing my frustration, she insisted on leaving. She remained unresponsive, like a brick wall. As she walked away, I caught one last glimpse of her eyes, devoid of emotions. I wanted to call out to her as I watched her retreating figure, hoping she might glance back, but the heart in me knew that it would not change anything. My final plea to her echoed in

my heart, urging her to turn back and recognise the depth of my love for her. Yet, she never once glanced in my direction. She walked away as if I had never been a part of her life. That agonising moment pierced my heart like a blade. My heart died. Arriving at the hotel, I could not sleep well. I was shattered. I texted her to seek answers, but she remained adamant that love cannot be forced, and she had shared her reasons several times. She had no intention of repeating herself. She insisted that I back off and accept that our relationship was over. Although she apologised, I questioned her sincerity because her actions had been blatantly unfair to me. Apologies were for accidental errors, not deliberate ones.

In the next minute, she withdrew her apology with confidence, asserting that she had done nothing wrong and was no longer sorry. Feeling ashamed for loving someone with such a callous attitude, I berated myself for my emotional weakness, unable to overcome the despair. I cried continuously throughout the sleepless

nights. The next morning, I wandered the streets, grappling with the desperate need to save our love but unsure of who to turn to for help. I clung to the brass coin taken from my wallet and felt like throwing it away in despair. However, I hesitated to throw it away, feeling a deep intuition that this coin held the potential to become a decisive factor in future moments of doubt or wavering faith. I would continue keeping it in my wallet, knowing that even if I didn't receive an answer now, someday I might. This coin was given in the name of love, and I would choose to let go of it only when true love revealed itself. Passing by a nearby temple, I questioned God about the purpose of my existence and the beliefs I should hold onto. I stared at God with tears in my eyes, my heart heavy with countless questions yet finding no answers. Each step of my journey was a struggle, akin to scaling a mountain in solitude. I boarded the bus back to Singapore via Ai, thinking that no one would ever travel as far as me for love, yet my effort was not appreciated. I felt lost.

I had always kept my struggles hidden from my parents, especially my mother, who diligently called to check on my well-being every day. Although I would share my feelings with them, I would usually share the tip of the iceberg, avoiding the depth of my emotions. Despite my reluctance to conceal my true state, I would pretend as if everything was fine for the sake of my loved ones. My parents had planned a three-day two-night trip to Singapore, eager to explore the city and spend time with me. My sister couldn't join due to work commitments. They arrived at the airport on 5th June, and I was there to pick them up, welcoming them warmly after a month apart. Taking a taxi, we enjoyed lunch at Little India, relishing authentic Indian cuisine. Later, we checked into a hotel in Chinatown. After a short rest, I took them around Singapore's city centre in the evening and we went shopping together. My father wanted to buy a pair of sunglasses that was not too expensive. Hence, I brought him to a shop that offered a wide range of brands and designs, where he tried on several pairs. Eventually, he found one that he liked

but hesitated due to the price. Sensing his reluctance, I intervened and negotiated with the sales associate who informed that the price was already a discounted one. Knowing that my father liked the sunglasses and he indeed looked good wearing it, I decided to purchase it as a gesture of appreciation for his support in my life journey. Though he offered his card to pay, I insisted on using mine. I was glad to have the opportunity to do something special for my father by treating him to a fancy pair of sunglasses. He accepted the gesture without a word, but I sensed his gratitude.

We continued to wander around the mall and enjoyed teatime in a café. Later at night, we went to Chinatown, immersing ourselves in the vibrant Chinese cultural atmosphere with colourful lights adorning the streets. We spent quality family time, our first holiday together in a long while. Dinner was at a random restaurant where we sampled various dishes. While my mother and I found the food average, my father was unimpressed, deeming it below par and

overpriced. Frustrated by his repeated complains, I reminded him that it was our responsibility to pay for the meal since we had eaten them, instead of criticising it over and over again. Thereafter, he settled the bill, vowing never to return to the restaurant again. We returned to the hotel, a five-minute walk away, with snacks and drinks bought from a convenience store for us to enjoy in our room. The night came to an end as we chit-chat over the drinks, building anticipation for the next day's adventures. The following morning, we rose early, energised for the day ahead. After breakfast, we made our way to Universal Studios, the highlight of our trip. I remembered enjoying the thrilling rides and immersing in the world of blockbuster films when my parents brought the eight-year-old me to Universal Studios in California. Recalling these fond memories from childhood, I was eager to return the favour by bringing my parents to the one in Singapore. We took a train to Sentosa Island where the Universal Studios was located, and purchased our tickets from a

self-service machine and fastened them securely around our wrists.

Our day was filled with exhilarating rides and exploring the magical world of epic films, with these precious moments captured in countless photos taken throughout the outing. We braved most of the rides, pausing only briefly in the evening when light rain interrupted our fun. While waiting for the rain to stop, we bonded over some drinks and snacks. My mother was exhausted from the walk and fun. While she took a break with my father, I seized the opportunity to experience the extreme roller coaster rides, which gave me a thrilling adrenaline rush. Upon rejoining them, my father shared a snapshot he had taken of me mid-ride, pointing out my expression as I soared upside down. I was impressed by how he was able to recognise me from so far away, even when I was high up on the roller coaster. As night fell, we embarked on a brief shopping spree to create lasting memories before my parents leave for Anbu. While my mother purchased

a few souvenirs, I decided on a cute Minion flask for myself. After returning to the hotel for a short break, we hopped on another train to enjoy a delicious dinner in the city centre. Realising I needed more clothes for another night's stay in the hotel with my parents, my father and I headed to my hostel while my mother returned to the hotel first. I was pleased to seize the opportunity to show my father the hostel where I had been living for the past six months. While I retrieved my clothes, I told my father to wait for me at the entrance or he could grab a quick drink at a nearby restaurant where I often frequented for breakfast and dinner.

Once I had my clothes, we hurried back to the train station to catch the last train, knowing there wouldn't be any available after midnight. Luckily, we made it in time. After stopping by a convenience store to grab a few drinks, we spent our final night together with a cosy chit-chat. Out of the blue, my father expressed concern about my well-being. He asked if I was still

in touch with Angel. Unsure of how to respond, I remained silent. Ultimately, I let out a sigh and said that we hadn't been in contact for months. Nonetheless, considering his protective nature, I did not wish to worry him and promised him that I was coping well. We spent a peaceful night and checked out of the hotel the next day. With time to spare before their flight, we enjoyed brunch at Little India. We also went to a mall where my mother bought a pair of sports shoes for her future travels. As the departure time approached, we boarded the train to the airport. Before leaving, my mother comforted me, assuring me that everything would turn out well. With a nod of my head, I waved them goodbye. My father waved consistently until he disappeared at the immigration point.

I was getting emotional as an overwhelming sense of loneliness enveloped me. Tears started to well up as I grappled with the reality of their absence. The eerie silence that followed was jarring as I knew that I had no one else other than them. I trusted

Angel with my future, yet she did not want to be part of it, which left me feeling abandoned and utterly alone. I reached out to Angel and shared about my parents' visit to Singapore and the time we spent together, accompanied by photos capturing our moments. Hoping to bridge the gap between us, I tried to strike conversations on our daily lives. Every day, I would ponder how she was doing, to which I was unsure if this was good or bad given the current circumstances. She was pleased to hear that I had a good time with my parents. However, her responses were sparse, lacking the depth of our past exchanges filled with love and passion. In the past, we used to text each other so much that we often found a day wasn't enough to say everything we wanted to. The contrast between then and now weighed heavily on me, leading me to question whether I was to blame for the growing distance between us. I could feel her slipping away, and in these challenging times, I wished we could be there for each other, never forsaking one another for selfish or irrational reasons. Come what may, I refused to give

up on our love. I was serious about her and my faith in true love remained steadfast.

Alongside these emotional struggles, I had been searching for a job. I had job interviews in both Singapore and Ai. Though uncertain of the outcome, I shared my interview experiences with Angel, hoping for her support and understanding. She replied in a liner, congratulating me and wishing me all the best. She also asked about the jobs I had applied for and where I intended to work. Excited to share more, I asked if I could call her so that we could talk further. She declined and shared her preference to communicate through text only, to which I said that I would prefer to share verbally and hear her voice, instead of using text messages. In response, she brushed it off, saying it was fine and I needn't trouble myself to share via text. I felt hurt by her reluctance to engage in a proper conversation with me, even for a brief call, as if I was a nuisance. Later, she texted to say that she had transferred the amount for the food donation given to

the orphanage. Annoyed, I opined that she should have given me a heads up prior to that. She replied that it did not matter, as it was her obligation to pay her share. Her behaviour made me feel as though there was no 'us', as if she and I were separate individuals. Most importantly, it felt like a transaction, rather than a friendly relationship without barriers. I loved her for who she was, not for her wealth. While I appreciated her intention to return the money, she could have informed me first. If I was particular about money, I wouldn't have committed to monthly payments for our future home. She adopted a patronising tone, implying that if I was experiencing financial difficulties, she could offer her assistance.

I was bewildered by the difference in our perspectives and how cold she had become. Her words cut deep. In the following days, my heart grew restless and lonely. Our love was slowly fading, and I needed to make a final effort to revive it. I reminisced about our moments together, gathering photos from the past four years. Each morning, I would send her a few

photos to remind her of why and how we fell in love, accompanied by descriptions capturing the significance of each moment. I even compiled an album of her high school photos, showing how much I admired both her younger and current self. Although I wasn't part of her high school days, I admired and loved her for the person she became, from a teenager to an adult. Initially, she was grateful for the memories I rekindled, but eventually, she stopped acknowledging my heartfelt efforts. Finally, she informed me that my actions would not impact or alter anything, and suggested to stop sending those photos as they were eating into her phone memory space. I questioned whether our relationship meant anything to her, and if she respected our bond at all. She requested me to let her go, claiming that I was suffocating her every day, making each day a living hell. She threatened to walk away if I continued to hold her back. I was disheartened by her self-centredness, as she only seemed to think of herself, never about us. She never saw me as good enough, as if our shared journey meant nothing to

her. Her stubbornness was like granite, unyielding and unbreakable. I grew increasingly frustrated with her inability to understand and appreciate my sincerity, resilience and loyalty. Others would have given up, but here I was, persevering to revive our relationship even in the face of repeated rejections.

I believed she had to explore the world to learn to discern between what's genuine and what's not. I longed to shield her from the harsh realities of life, but her current attitude was likely to lead her to learning the hard way. Overwhelmed with emotions, I acted impulsively, booking a bus ticket to Anbu to be with my mother. I called her, expressing my turmoil and desire to return home for a brief respite. Understanding my distress, my mother advised me to stay safe on my journey back home. Upon reaching Anbu in the evening, I took a train to a station where my mother picked me up with ease. Over a fast-food dinner, I poured out my frustrations to her, detailing Angel's absurd behaviour. It was hard to believe that this

woman was the same person I had known for four years. I was stunned by how much she had changed in just a few months, leaving me uncertain about whom I could trust these days. I felt as though everyone around me wore masks, hiding their true self beneath a façade. It was difficult to reconcile with Angel. She was able to casually suggest that I marry someone else, without considering my deep commitment to her. She thought I was simply looking for a woman who could fulfil my needs. I wanted to prove that I was more than that, but I was not sure how to do so. I confided in my mother. She speculated that Angel might have someone else in her life, explaining her neglect of me. While uncertain, I just knew that she was very important to me, outweighing other priorities of mine. My mother told me to move on from Angel and stop being obsessed with her. However, I found it difficult to let go. I still loved her dearly, despite her hurtful words and actions.

