

# Corporate Majnu

Corporate Majnu  
A Romantic Novel  
By Isha Gaur

# Introduction

In the bustling corridors of corporate life—where deadlines loom and meetings blur into one another—there are stories waiting to unfold. Stories of longing glances, unspoken words, and hearts navigating the delicate balance between ambition and desire. Corporate Majnu is a journey into the lives of young professionals caught in the maze of boardrooms and bittersweet connections. It's a tale where love isn't always grand gestures or promises "from the moon and back." Sometimes, it's the quiet resilience of someone piecing themselves back together, learning to heal, and choosing to build a life with the person who feels like home. Here, love whispers in shared lunch breaks, and hides behind the armor of professionalism. But when it finally steps into the light, it asks: How far would you go to rewrite your own story?

# Acknowledgements

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# Chapter 1

Sonali, a 22-year-old introvert, possesses an intriguing and complex understanding of vehemence. The only person she truly feels comfortable with is her best friend, Mahi. The two have been inseparable since kindergarten, sharing everything from lunch boxes to secrets. Naturally, they decided to take their first steps into the professional world together, applying to the same organization for their first job. Mahi, tall with sharp features and a bold personality, is everything Sonali isn't—but that's exactly what makes their friendship work. Sonali stood outside the office floor, her bright eyes scanning the area for help. Despite two attempts, her ID card refused to grant her access. Her long hair was tied back in a ponytail, and her round face was set in a determined expression. Just as she reached for her phone to call the trainer, a tall figure approached - she caught the movement from the corner of her eye, someone walking purposefully toward her.

"Need help?" Abhinav smiled, tilting his head toward the ID card reader. He had been walking down the corridor for a quick tea break when he noticed a girl struggling to get into the workspace.

Abhinav, 24, tall and charming, had warm brown eyes that perfectly complemented his dusky skin. He had always been cheerful and helpful by nature—but what caught his attention was the way Sonali's high ponytail swayed as she glanced around for help. It's so cute, he thought to himself. Sonali looked at him, and their eyes met. She introduced herself and explained that she was having trouble getting in. "Did you get access from Admin? You might be facing an issue with accessibility," Abhinav said in a calm tone. She furrowed her eyebrows slightly. "Yes, I did get access yesterday. I don't know what the problem is." "Don't worry, these things happen," he said, reassuring her. "You can head to the Admin office—they'll sort it out for you." "Oh, alright. Thank you." She nodded and picked up her pace, her steps echoing the quiet urgency in her mind. Later that day, during the training session, Kunal, the trainer of the new batch, asked a few questions to connect with everyone and lighten the mood before the start of a new day of training.

"How's everyone? I hope everyone enjoyed their weekends," Kunal exclaimed. "Let's start with Mahi. What did you do on the weekend?!" "Well, Sonali and I hung out at Connaught Place," answered Mahi. "Sounds fun," Kunal said, his tone light and playful. "And what did you do, Tushar?" "Soya hu (I slept)," he replied, and everyone started laughing. "Haha, alright, I guess everyone enjoyed their weekends in their way."

He rubbed his palms together lightly, as if preparing to say something important.

"Now, let's get started. I gave you guys some points to remember. Did everyone go through those points? I'm gonna ask questions." "Bro, what is next? They're going to give us mid-semester exams like in school," said Mahi in Sonali's ear, which made Sonali chuckle. "Rahul, would you care to tell us the first point?" With that, the training session started—and went on slowly. As the training session ended, Sonali and Mahi headed to the office canteen for lunch. The cafeteria buzzed with laughter and chatter. Just outside the window, a road stretched out, lined with cars probably heading toward their destinations. Beyond the road lay a serene view of trees and open plains stretching as far as the eye could see. The air was filled with the comforting aroma of aloo parathas, tea, and freshly brewed coffee. "I'm starving. What did you bring for lunch, Sonali?" asked Mahi. "I brought macaroni. What about you?" "Same old, daal chawal. I'll reheat our lunch in the meantime, you save us some

seats.” With that, Mahi took off, and Sonali began scanning the canteen for a place to sit, knowing how crowded it got during lunchtime. Sonali went to grab a seat when she saw Abhinav coming towards her. She felt her heart rate increase. “Hi, Sonali,” said Abhinav with a gentle smile. “Hi, Abhinav,” said Sonali, sharing the smile. “Did your issue with the ID card get resolved?” “Oh yes, it got resolved. Thank you for your suggestion that day.” “No problem. Will see you around.” With a gentle grin, Abhinav went to his friend. “Bro, who is that girl? She is pretty,” said Karan. He’s 27, unfairly charismatic, and smarter than he lets on, and had been Abhinav’s first friend at the company. “She just joined here,” said Abhinav with brightened eyes. Abhinav and Kunal joined their friends and started having lunch. Abhinav looked for Sonali, and then he found her sitting with Mahi at the corner seat of the cafeteria. She was chatting with Mahi over lunch, and Abhinav stole glances at her, like he’d done since the day they met, just to watch her in those ordinary moments. She took a bite off of her lunch and did a little shoulder wiggle, she always did when something tasted good—completely unintentional, but always adorable to him.

## Chapter 2

The reception is beautifully decorated with marigolds. There is an antique gold-plated diya standing at the centre, and at the bottom, there's a rangoli in the shape of a flower made with rose petals. The workspace is also decorated with marigolds, and small jhoomars in the shape of diyas are hung on top. Yellow-coloured LED lights are installed in a crescent shape above the gates of the cafeteria and the cabin.

Everyone is in traditional wear. There are girls dressed in sarees, kurtas, and shararas, and boys are dressed in kurtas and pyjamas. "Sonali, let's go, we have to collect the colors from Kushal," said Mahi, pulling Sonali by the hand.

For Diwali, the office organized a rangoli competition open to everyone, from full timers to trainees. In the hall before the reception, different groups were gathered, discussing what design they should make and selecting the color combinations for their rangolis. Sonali had always been good at drawing, and she used her imagination to sketch a peacock. She chose the colors carefully to match the beautiful shades of its feathers. "Wow, you guys are doing a really good job. We have trainees from other departments in the competition as well. You guys have to win!" said Kunal, raising both hands in the air with a double thumbs-up. "Don't worry, Kunal. We will win. We have our top performer, Sonali," said Mahi, tapping Sonali's shoulder. "Good, good. Keep it up." Soon after the winners were declared, everyone stood near the peacock rangoli to take a group photo, as they had won the competition. Just then, Abhinav entered the reception hall. He was admiring the Diwali decorations to himself when he saw Sonali. She was adjusting her saree while looking down, then looked up, readying herself for the photo. His legs didn't take another step; he just stood there, glancing at her. How can someone stand there so unaware of their beauty? How can someone look so naturally graceful? Abhinav thought to himself. "One, two, three... click." After the photo was taken, Abhinav approached her. "Hi, Sonali. Congratulations on winning the competition," he said, his lips curving into a gentle grin, trying to hide how awestruck he was by her. "Thank you, Abhinav, and happy Diwali," said Sonali, her cheeks flushing at the thought of Abhinav seeing her in a saree and all dolled up for the first time. Their eyes met. And just as Abhinav was about to open his mouth to wish her back, Karan appeared and threw an arm around his shoulder. "Chal, bro, chai pii kar aate hai (let's go for a cup of tea)," he said in a casual tone. Abhinav glanced at him with quiet disappointment, thinking how close he and Sonali had come to sharing a moment. "Wait, first let me introduce you guys. Sonali, he's my friend Karan," said Abhinav, looking at Sonali first, then at Karan.

Karan looked at her and said, 'Hi.' Sonali replied with a soft 'Hello.'

And after wishing Sonali a happy Diwali, Abhinav went off with Karan—though his steps were reluctant. He wanted to say more, to find the right words that wouldn't make him sound awkward or over-eager. If only Karan hadn't interrupted, maybe he would've finally found the courage to tell her just how beautiful she looked. Right after Abhinav went, Mahi came from behind and took Sonali to the cafeteria to receive refreshments. "Who was that guy you were talking to at the reception hall, Sonali?" asked Mahi curiously.

"He's Abhinav—the guy I told you about, who helped me that day with the ID card." Sonali's cheeks flushed as she said his name.

"I see," said Mahi, without giving it much thought. She didn't know yet that Abhinav and Sonali were quietly, slowly, but deeply getting inclined towards each other.

"We worked so hard for their rangoli competition, and they've provided us with samosas. How will we ever pay off this generosity?" added Mahi sarcastically.

"Well, there's an arrangement for a buffet at lunchtime," said Sonali, trying not to laugh.

"Really!?" Mahi's expression shifted from discontent to astonishment. "Yes," said Sonali, and both of them high-fived. While the day was passing by quickly and everyone was enjoying the festivities, in Abhinav's department, the air had turned heavy. "Abhinav! Where is your focus? Don't you have a mind? Why did you make this mistake? You know how important this presentation is for us!" yelled Abhinav's manager, furious over an error in his PPT.

"I'll look into it," said Abhinav in a calm voice.

"Yes. Provide me with the amended PPT by tomorrow, anyhow," demanded the manager.

"But tomorrow is Diwali. It's our day off." Even though the manager had misbehaved with him, Abhinav maintained his calm posture while confronting him.

"Abhinav, if the mistake hadn't been made, you wouldn't have to work on Diwali. Now focus on your work." With that, the manager walked away. "Abhinav, are you okay? Ignore him, huh. He's like this only," said one of Abhinav's colleagues. "Well, I did make a mistake," said Abhinav, and focused on his work.'

After a while, when their shift was about to be over, everyone was getting ready to go home. Karan took Abhinav to grab a cup of coffee—he wanted to console him. Karan looked at him while taking his first sip of coffee.

"Abhinav, I've been thinking. We've been working together for so long, yet I've never seen you get mad at anyone, or even at a situation. How do you manage to do that?"

"I don't manage anything. It comes naturally to me."

Or does it? Do I even know how to get mad at someone? How do you even know how much you should say—or when to stop—when you're angry?

Abhinav's mind wandered off to the things he hadn't shared with anyone. Since childhood, he had seen his parents fight, loud, bitter arguments that left a mark deeper than he ever let on. He'd spent a lifetime holding things in—every flare of hurt, every flicker of frustration—scared that releasing any of it would make him just like them. Karan let out a sharp breath.

"Bro, sometimes I wonder, did I study all these years just to be treated like this by people like him?"

"You're right... But what can we even do?" Abhinav replied, his voice trailing off, his mind elsewhere.

"Well, you could at least try venting once in a while," Karan said with a sarcastic grin.

"I'll give it a try," Abhinav smiled faintly, though his thoughts were still far from the conversation.

Both of them drank their coffee in silence and went back inside to get their laptop bags. As Abhinav was heading toward the parking lot afterwards, he saw Sonali standing near the reception, chatting with her colleagues. He felt a calm rush over him, and the chaos he had been feeling just moments ago began to fade. Her smile was like a balm to his soul.