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**Sincerely,  
Rita Achanya**

# Days of Our Lives by Rita Achanya



Day 1: We met at our high school reunion, some years after leaving it. I was watching you, and thought you were too quiet standing there so by habit, I walked my boisterous self to you.

At first, you answered my long questions with short replies but I got you talking when I asked and was surprised you had been in my class. You said you wouldn't blame me, you were always the reserved type back then, but you knew who I was, who wouldn't. Me, the social prefect who almost made the school authorities ban prom because of her additional plans. We reminisced about that prom. You said you had left early before it all hit the fan and known about the entire fiasco from Snapchat, shocked about how I pulled it off. I joked that, the more shocking factor was the fact you had any social media. You laughed and made a witty remark which made me laugh enough to ask for your phone and save my phone number. For some reason, I did not want to leave your side and as the night grew, we kept inching closer, talking until I got pulled away for some duty. I remember how suddenly shy I felt when I looked back at you as I walked away and you were mirroring my gaze.

Day 56: Our first date. I was surprised my phone rang and it was you, asking if I was free to get something after work. You were in town for work and said you usually were, but now I made the trip worthwhile. I made a joke about mixing pleasure and business and you asked what time I would get off work so you could pick me up.

We had been just chatting a lot on the phone since we met, our conversations becoming more intense with every notification. I agreed, trying my best not to feel too flustered that I would see you again.

Day 270: You made us official. You were in town again, and we were on a date. Dates were not as surprising now with how quickly we'd progressed: late-night conversations whenever our schedules would allow, phone sex, my smiles at your name whenever it buzzed my phone, pleas to get a room whenever you came around and we hung out with each other's friends. My friends already called me by your last name. So, you asked, 'Can I be your man?' on a large cheesecake, my favorite, and I said yes, reminding myself to tell my sneaky link it was over between us.

Day 365: Our first time. It was in my apartment kitchen. You took a leave at work and visited because it was a year since the best thing ever happened to you, you said.

Our abstinence so far was, you reasoned, that what we shared meant too much to let dissipate from satisfied lust and I guess I loved the slow burn of it so I obliged. Allowing you leave me heated after passionate make outs that never explored below my waist and left me hungering for more, hoping each time that this would be the time it happened, until you kissed my clothes back onto my body each time.

The time finally felt right to you. You did not need to book hotels when you visited anymore and we had fallen so much into step with each other, I always considered leaving with you whenever I had to say bye.

It was mystifying when our bodies finally collided, like puzzle pieces coming together to form the picture that was us and we fit so perfectly. It overwhelmed me how you gnawed at my body with a passion I had no say in reciprocating because my body already acted on its own around you, responding to and needing you.

Day 985: We had our first major fight. You discovered I had been seeing someone else during the early days of our togetherness. I didn't understand your anger because it was before we became official. You argued that we were already together even before making it official. I laughed, thinking you weren't serious, but your jaw set as you revealed, you had let everyone else go after our first date. I scoffed and retorted that you couldn't expect the same from me just because you did.

Besides, it was not like he was anything serious or would have ever been if he wanted to and even if he was serious, I never put all my eggs in one basket. I didn't tell you all that, I said instead that you could leave if you wanted, and were that angry. I remember the look on your face after you grabbed your things and how I swore to myself never to let that look cross your face again. I knew it wasn't just about what we were fighting about, it was about other things I did and never took responsibility for and you had had it the. I knew this but I didn't apologize then, I never did and we would not speak to each other for the next week. While I was a mess, my pride did not let me reach out to you. You did and we never spoke about it again.

Day 1,095: We got engaged. I had felt it coming days before you did it. Your excitement gave too much away. Also, my mother, who didn't see the sentimentality of surprise, told me of your intentions beforehand. You had talked to my parents, and asked for my hand in marriage even showed them the ring. "It is gold plated with emerald set stone. That rock is massive, I know he'll take care of you well" she said.

Her exposure though, did not prepare me enough for how beautiful it was when you got down on one knee beside the cheesecake with your question written in chocolate and asked me to marry you. I loved it and I love you so obviously, I said yes. You had switched jobs to join me, we used the same toothbrush on more than one occasion, fought over the best way to leave the toothpaste and how best to place tissue in the roll, chosen the song we call "our song", binge - watched my favorite shows together when you had the time. You got me my favorite things whenever my periods became unbearable and I could not leave the bed.

While I couldn't eat the Maltesers for fear of worsening my pain, the fridge froze in them

your act of love and when I got better, that love melted on my tongue and spread to every part of my body.

Day 1,853: We married. My mother and aunts were more happy than they should be. “I thought you’d be reverend sister like me” My nun aunt joked. They all had been so animated by you since the day they met you, my father once whispered to me, they wished they could marry you instead.

Day 2,520: We had our first child. She was so beautiful; was what I thought when she was placed in my arms and it did not stop as she grew older and they joined her, all beautiful. Like our life together that each day, I fought harder the thought that I did not deserve it. A thought, I guess the universe agreed .

Day 5,760: We lost them. I remember every detail that led to that moment of this day vividly. Our daughter was seated in front with me, ordering the snacks from the roadside vendor while I scrolled through my phone. Her brother was backseat pitching, “Mummy, it’s Bobo me I want o. Please let her not buy Mr Fruits.”

I looked up from my phone enough to plead the woman replace the drink our daughter already ordered for our son and she said she would have to get it from somewhere else then left to.

Our daughter mumbling that they would be late for school, retorted to her brother, “Every time Bobo like a baby. Are you still a baby?” At seven and ten, they both were to me but I didn’t see the need to inform them. They had begun bickering at his response of kicking her seat and soon, their whining at each other became grating to my ears. Usually, I would tune them out and let them have at each other for a while before interfering but I needed all the focus for the mail I was typing up and I didn’t want them to wake their brother sleeping in his car seat. I was about to give my legendary “Oya, both of you enough.” and from the corner of my eye, I saw the woman returning with their snacks. Then the truck, hit and stole our babies lives.

Day 5,812: When I came to, I grieved before anyone told me. No one needed to tell me they were gone. You were clasping my hand at my bed side when I opened my eyes to the harsh lights. Immediately I met your eyes, I knew they were gone. My wail and feeble struggle to leave the bed which got louder and stronger at each attempt made you rush to get some help. I was hysterical and they held me back explaining I needed to regain my strength. What I needed was to leave, I needed to go find them. Surely this was not real. I would wake up and be back to that moment, to their noise and wipe my eyes from this bad dream, would hold them again.

Day 6,177: I have become a suffering shell of myself. I blamed myself. There was no one else to blame, not even the truck driver who knew his brake was failing and still drove it. I was to blame. If only I had taken the time to make their lunch before school like a good mother instead of depending on snacks. If only I had been stricter and not made the woman switch the drinks to suit our son's want. If onlys were all I had. Not really, you were there but we bore our grief individually. I wouldn't let you join yours with mine.

I hated I survived. I hated the fact our babies' bodies were too weak to survive the impact like I did. I hated that they were snatched from us in that way. I hated God for letting it. I hated that my faith was not enough to save them. I hated everything. People consoled me by reminding me how miraculous it was that I survived. How I should be grateful I still had my life. My mother would tell me after a year of still being a shell of myself, "You both are still young, you can have more children." And after she left, I went into the bathroom and slit my vein.

Day 7,560: We got a divorce. Not for the reason people thought - the reason you let them believe- that our grief had cause us to fall apart irreparably. No, I cheated. I don't even know why I did it. I would not even try to rationalize a reason. He was someone I do not even remember his last name or facial features anymore either ways, he was someone that was not you. You would not have known if I did not want you to know and you would have stayed if I wanted you to. Had I groveled and begged you to forgive me, you might have stayed. If I did not also confess to other things. The mucus and clots, that could have been our child I flushed with the pills, three pills. You did not understand why I would do that

when we had lost so much and I did not see the need to make you understand. How having anymore children angered me. Like our babies were erasers, replaceable. It made me scared too, that if we had another, we would lose them somehow. Again, I did not tell you all that. Instead, I blatantly said that it wouldn't have been yours. You finally realized I wanted you to leave by how insistent I was on hurting you, and you acquiesced. You stopped trying to make me talk, and the look – the one I vowed never to let cross your face – was there. At that moment, it was better than the look your face had come to have for me: a look of pity with a smidge of blame beneath. So, you left, and I shelled up completely.

Day 11,780: We found each other again, at our high school reunion. For a long time after you left I pined, deluded myself that you would be back, that I deserved you coming back to me. Then I resolved, you did not deserve the way I punished you like you had not lost with me, like my hurt meant more than yours. Then I accepted it would be better you never came back, our time together had run its course in life. Then there you were, physically and not on the social media platforms I stalked you by. I was surprised you showed. In the years since, I immersed myself in social activities with unmatched zeal, and our school reunions were no exception. Each year, when I noticed that you hadn't RSVP, it was a wave of relief and disappointment.

Your friend dragged you along, you explained after our short awkwardness of deciding how best to greet before you stretched for a brief, no chest touching hug. It was easier to exist with the thoughts of you when I could not physically see you. But being in such close proximity with you at that moment, I was embarrassed by how much I missed you. How I wanted to cling to you, tell you everything about my life, how empty it was without you, how stupid I was, sorry I am. Apologize to you, grovel and beg right there and now with our schoolmates watching. I realize now, I would have done so if she did not come up to you. It seemed her presence surprised you even, like you had not come with her. She placed a possessive arm on your chest, her other arm, around your waist before she acknowledged my presence. She was younger, about a decade older than our daughter would have been. As she smiled sweetly at me, I felt like clawing her face and scratching some of her perfect youthfulness. You both strangely looked good together I had to admit to myself. You aged

quite remarkably and the fact I couldn't say the same for myself made me want to wring your neck too after hers.

She knew who I was and explained that you two were together. She narrated how you met, somewhere that involved a dance floor, while you stood there in silence. I took the cue to leave when she began to amuse herself by recalling your terrible dancing, as if I did not already know that fact about you. Like I did not know you just as much as the back of my hand, which was why I knew she would not last long with you. She would be gone soon enough like the others and I allowed myself to relish that thought. Especially since your eyes kept following me across the room. I could feel their intensity on me the rest of the night.

Today : She's gone and you are lying next to me, passed out from how we satisfied the hunger for each other we buried over the years. I trail the tip of my pen down your chest and you shuffle but don't wake. You could sleep through a tsunami. I have always tried to scribble down the days of my life for as long as I can remember and now, I am penning down us because lately, more violently each day, I feel my mind tucking and discarding my memories into crevices I can never pull them out of. I don't want to ever have to forget us, I revel in how we have stuck through it all to this moment. I know one day, these memories, these days of our lives we've shared, will be all I have left. And as they've always been, will be all that would have the power to pull me back, out of the slipping darkness.