

Two Kinds of Brave

A love story about a girl who fought and a boy who stayed

SUBASH

CHAPTER 1

The Girl Who Never Said Sorry

Tara Rajendran was late, and she was not sorry.

She pushed the classroom door open at nine minutes past nine. The door was heavy and it banged against the wall. Forty heads turned. She walked to the third row and sat down and took out her notebook.

Professor Menon stopped talking.

"Tara."

"Sir."

"You are late."

"Yes, sir."

He waited. The class waited. In three years, everybody in that room had learned what this pause was for. It was the space where a student says *sorry sir* and the professor says *sit down* and the lesson goes on.

Tara looked at him and said nothing.

"Do you have an explanation?"

"The bus was late, sir."

"That is not an apology."

"No, sir. It is an explanation. You asked for an explanation."

Somebody at the back laughed and turned it into a cough.

Professor Menon looked at her for a long moment. Then he went back to the board, because he was sixty-one years old and he had been doing this job for a long time and he knew which fights were worth having.

Tara wrote the date at the top of a clean page and underlined it.

* * *

Here is what you should know about her, and then we can go on.

She was twenty. She was in her third year of a degree she was very good at. She came first in almost everything, and when she came second she did not sulk, she went and found out why.

She was not unkind. This is the part people got wrong about her. She helped people constantly — she explained things twice, she lent her notes to anybody who asked, she stayed late.

But she did not soften anything. If your answer was wrong she said *that's wrong*. If a rule was stupid she said *this rule is stupid*, and she said it to the person who made the rule, in the corridor, in front of others.

And she never, ever said sorry.

The story continues.

41 chapters and an epilogue. 104 pages.

Available now from Liternational Press.