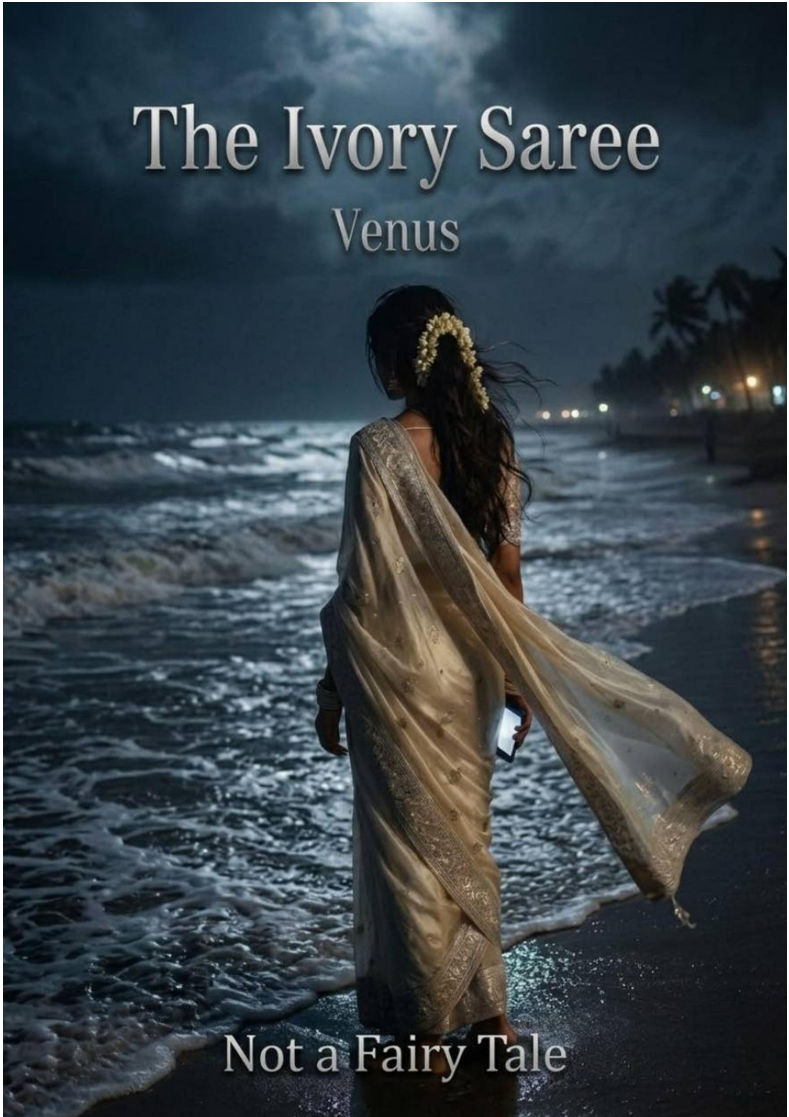
The Ivory Saree
Venus
Not a Fairy Tale

Venus Venus
The Ivory Saree

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Аннотация

After a desperate suicide on a nighttime beach in Mumbai, a young woman finds herself in limbo. To find peace, she must return to the same shore and save three strangers from a fatal mistake — including the man whose betrayal drove her to death.

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Chapter One: A Desperate Step

The courtyard of the ancient temple was drowning in the thick Mumbai night, heavy with the scent of jasmine and dust. Here, far from the noisy avenues, lay a deafening silence, broken only occasionally by the chirping of crickets and the dull rustle of the night surf somewhere on the edge of the district.

Amira sat on the cold stone steps.

She was wearing a magnificent ivory wedding sari—the heavy fabric, embroidered with silver threads, seemed out of place and alien among the ancient bas-reliefs. She had traveled thousands of kilometers, defied her family's will, left behind her familiar life in another country and everything she had ever known, all for one person. They had planned this elopement in secret from everyone. Relatives on both sides were categorically against their union: different worlds, different traditions, irreconcilable walls of prejudice. Yet Amira believed that love was capable of shattering any barrier.

She glanced nervously at the dial of her wristwatch. The hands relentlessly counted the minutes well past midnight.

A soul-chilling despair was rising inside her. Her breathing

faltered, and a tight, painful knot formed in her chest. With trembling fingers, Amira pulled a smartphone from the folds of her dress. The screen brightly illuminated her pale, frightened face, tears frozen in the corners of her eyes.

With a shaking finger, she tapped a familiar contact and held the phone to her ear.

A long ring. A second. A third.

Her heart was pounding somewhere in her throat. Amira held her breath, praying to the higher powers that he would answer, that he would dispel this nightmare with his familiar voice.

The short, soulless beep of a declined call.

Silence crashed down on her with renewed force. He had rejected her call yet again over the past few hours, while she waited faithfully for him at the temple to bind themselves together forever in marriage.

Gasping with a sob, Amira pressed call again. Again the rings —long, dreary, counting down the seconds of her collapsing world. And again—the brief blow of a disconnect. One after another, thoughts raced through her head: "What if something happened to him? Or did he really abandon me? How am I going to live now? I gave up everything for him, I have nowhere to go back to. I am disgraced; my family will never forgive me."

The phone screen lit up again. A new message.

Amira drew in a ragged breath, clinging to that flash of light like a lifeline. But instead of the long-awaited "I'm on my way, sorry," cold letters formed into a verdict:

"I'm sorry. I can't. I can't give up my family."

The world around her seemed to spin off its orbit and plummet into a black abyss. The letters blurred with welling tears. No fight, no hope—only a cowardly period at the end of someone else's game. He chose their approval, their peace of mind, leaving her alone in a foreign metropolis. Without the language, without money, with all bridges burned behind her and her pride trampled.

Amira rose from the stone steps of the temple. Her legs could barely hold her; the heavy, silver-embroidered wedding sari tangled around her bare feet, yet she felt neither pain nor cold.

She broke into a run.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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