

She opened the parcel and found an envelope inside it. There was nothing written on the cover. After a moment's hesitation, she opened the envelope and took out a postcard. She noticed that there was something written next to the name label on the card but couldn't make out clearly as to what was written. She took out her glasses, put them on and tried to read the name. It said "Anita Agarwal". For a moment, she felt her whole body freeze. She felt as if her heart had stopped beating. In another second, she came out of her state of shock and dropped the card. She was sweating all over and her heart was pacing rapidly. Anita Agarwal, her best friend, was found dead in a deserted cabin in the nearby forest, 2 days ago.

She picked up the postcard, went and sat in her chair and turned it to the other side. She found a few lines scribbled but was unable to see as her eyes felt a bit too blurry to make a clear image of what was in front of her. She kept the card in her drawer, stood up and went to the washroom. There she took off her glasses, placed them near the wash basin and looked at the mirror to see a blurry and shrouded version of her. She bent down and splashed water onto her face and then took the towel and dried herself. She placed the towel back, put on her glasses and looked at the mirror and suddenly saw Anita standing behind her. She turned back fast but there was nothing there and she turned again to look at the mirror but nothing except her face was to be seen. Now her heart was racing so fast that she felt it might come out of her body. After a few minutes, she calmed herself down and went back to her desk.

She took out the card and read it. It said,

Dear Anupama,

By the time you receive this parcel, I'll probably be dead. I'm sending this to you because you are the only one I can trust. Please don't discuss with anyone about this parcel and burn this card once you have read it. There's something I want you to take from my apartment and once you have it, take it to a secure place and destroy it ASAP. I can't tell anything in detail here as this may get compromised.

P.S.: The Da Vinci Code; Love you dear.

A tear drop rolled down her eyes. She took a lighter, burned the card and put it in the dustbin. She quickly stood up, took her bag and left the office. She rushed to Anita's apartment. She still had a spare key to her apartment. She got in and locked the door. She found the place in a mess. Apparently, someone else had also been here searching for something. Probably the same thing, which she had to find and destroy. She thought about the card. She had heard Anita mention a couple of times that 'The Da Vinci Code' was her favourite book. She set about searching for that book hoping that the intruder hadn't already found it. After about 20 minutes of search in vain, she was sitting on the bed when suddenly, something in the cupboard caught her eye. She went over and pushed the clothes aside and there she saw, as to what looked like a small cabinet. She slid open the small door and saw a stack of books there. She looked through them and found the book 'The Da Vinci Code'. She took it, closed the cabinet, pulled back the clothes, closed the cupboard and left the apartment.

She rushed back to her apartment, went to her bedroom and took out the book from her bag. She slowly opened the book and flipped the pages. She saw something in the middle and turned to that page. She saw that a square slot had been made by cutting a square in each page, for about 50 pages, and she saw a small gadget in there. She took it out and was trying to figure out what it was. She suddenly remembered Anita's card which said, 'destroy it ASAP' but wanted to know what it was first. She saw that the gadget had an 8 digit dial, like in a number lock, and had a screen attached

above. She saw a red button over the screen and pressed it. The screen came on and said, 'PASSWORD: ', and a keyboard appeared on the screen. She typed 'thedavincicode' and pressed enter. It showed, 'access denied ; 2 trials left'. Suddenly, she remembered something in the card,

"P.S.: The Da Vinci **CODE; LOVE YOU DEAR.**

She typed, 'loveyoudear' and pressed enter. It showed, 'access granted'. Now, 8 boxes appeared in the screen with a statement, 'enter the digits set in the dial'. She checked the dial and typed what was already set : 08042013 and pressed enter. Suddenly some light from the gadget hit her face, blinding her and she closed her eyes.

She suddenly woke up. She looked around her and found that she was in her bed. She heaved a sigh of relief that it was all a nightmare. She got up and realised that she was wearing her work clothes. She wondered why and thought maybe she forgot to change before going to bed last night. She was going to the washroom when she felt something in her coat pocket. She put her hand in and took it out. Her breath stopped and her face became red on seeing what she held in her hands. It was the gadget. Suddenly, the land phone started to ring. She didn't move but stood staring at the phone and it went to voicemail. The voice on the other side said, "Hey Anu, its Anita. Get ready fast. We need to reach the office early today. Bye."