



*Colors of  
Fall*

*Susham Bedi*

**COLORS OF FALL**  
by  
**SUSHAM BEDI**

Give her any name you like. But it must be a romantic name, associated with Krishna, or Kama, the lover boys of Hindu mythology. Radhika, Madurika, Rati, Ritu, or Anuradha. But stay away from names like Devi, Puja, popular in the movies, our heroine is an unusual type. She is enchanted with the magic of romance, with fairy tales. In the blink of an eye, a sparrow is transformed into a princess, alights on this earth where a prince falls madly in love with her, is completely enraptured by her, and swears his undying love.

Now what one would call a name with romantic associations is appropriately subject to a difference of opinion. After all, no universally acceptable definition of love has yet been found, so how do you decide on a name with romantic meaning? The problem is not just her name, but also her age. Our heroine is no sweet sixteen nor a virgin. She's pushing forty, and still in search of romance. She also finds the situation amusing and puzzling because when she was sixteen, she was fearful about everything. Fear of her parents, fear of boys, as though talking to them could make her pregnant, and her fate would then be jumping into a well or taking pills that bring relief by endless sleep. So let's call her Kamini - a name not too romantic but not too prosaic.

Her friend Shama (flame - a romantic name, subject of poetry, songs of the fateful romance between flames and butterflies) had had an affair. Maybe Kamini was frightened just because of that. Shama's family had practically locked her up within the four walls of their house. She was even forbidden to come to the verandah, for the