

IFTISHAM

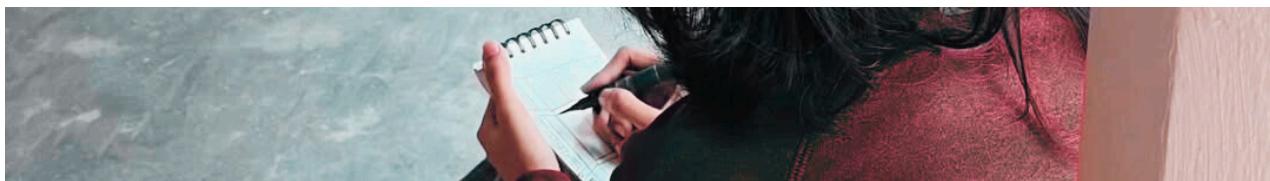


A BOOK BY MEHBOOB HASSAN

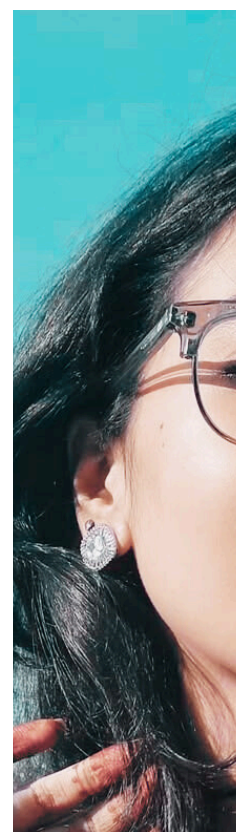
CHAPTER 1: OMNI GAZE

It all started with that *omni gaze* at an art exhibition when I asked the artist herself who the artist was. In that very moment, I knew I had found a friend in her. Her art made me realize that I had been *blooming in chaos* all along. And today, I found peace in that gaze. She had somehow figured out what I was trying to figure out: *passion*.

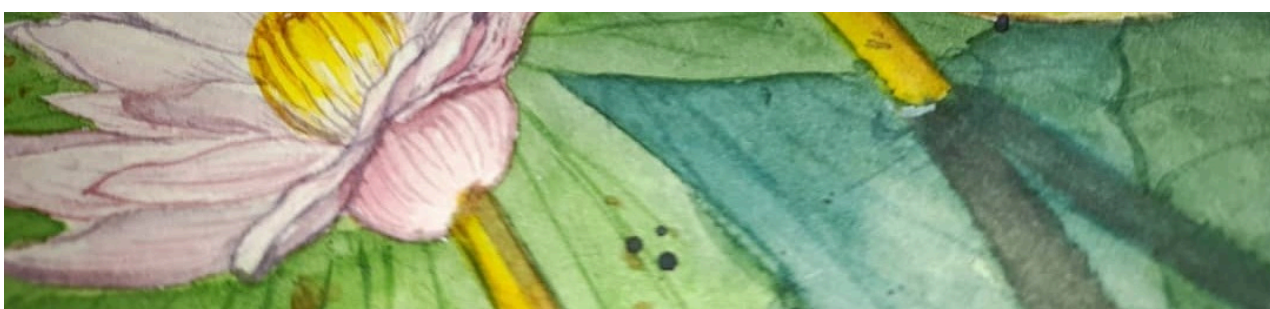




I immersed myself in her world of art, looking at everything she had painted—or rather, the art took me into her world. One abstract painting made me realize how she captures memories with paint on a canvas, just as I do with words.



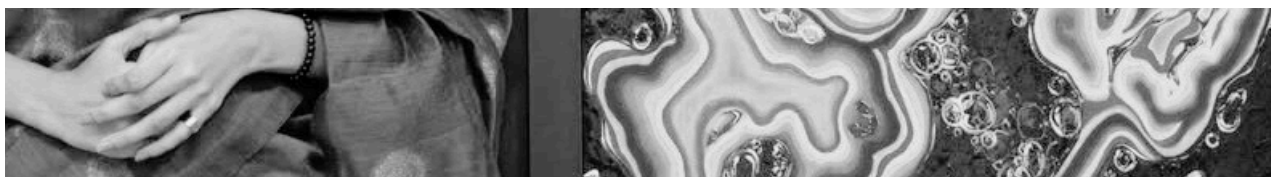
I wandered through the art house, exploring its few rooms, finding her essence in everything—from the smallest paintings to the largest ones in the exhibition.





She was so happy, clicking pictures, smiling so *brightly* that her braces seemed to be working extra hard to *hold her teeth in place*. Her happiness was infectious. Once I had finished looking at all the artwork, I turned to the greatest artwork of all—**her eyes**, framed in black spectacles. She must have seen many beautiful things, for how else could her eyes hold so much beauty?



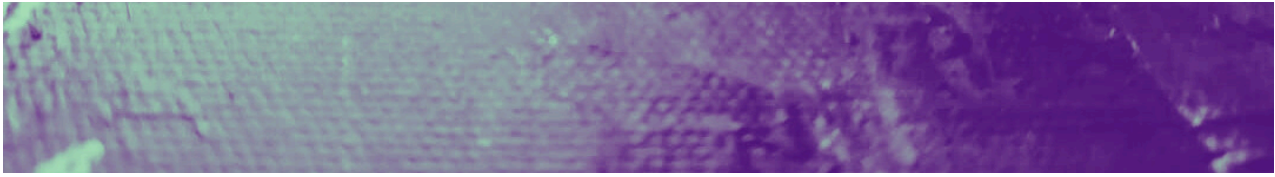


About three months after that day, I asked her on Instagram, "You tell me, what does *Iftisham* mean?"

She replied, "**Magnificent.**"

And I completely believed her. Her tiny existence is indeed magnificent—her mind holds a world of its own, and her eyes see past memories as bubbles and color patterns. Her hands know how gently to hold a brush and her mind knows how firmly to push her imagination. Her feet walk their own path, making a name for herself, independent of anyone else. She simply exists, being herself, inspiring me to live life magnificently.





Today is her birthday. She's turning **22**, and I am gifting her this **Chapter 1** as a present. I believe every story should have a proper beginning, even if not a proper ending. And if a writer feels that a story will end only when the writer does, then that story is worth exploring.

