

The New Indian Summer

Often when it is beginning to turn into fall, it is summery, hot and crisp and green. The Sun shines with all its might so that fall can barely manage to exhale a breath of wind. Why? Have you noticed how everything becomes beautiful and it seems like Fall and Summer are doing their best to make things merge? How the leaves eventually change colors, but are still clinging on to the trees? This is because of the quarreling seasons, Fall and Summer, and the girl who changed them.

Once upon a time, before anyone knew Indian Summer with its peaceful seasons, there were two conflicting seasons, Summer and Fall. Summer had been bright and had brought many successful harvests and happiness to the humans. He was feeling happy and proud since everyone enjoyed his presence. "Surely, I am better than Fall," he boasted. Underneath him, Fall stirred and yawned from his long slumber. Summer grew frightened. "I cannot let him take away my glory," he said, and began to make the Sun shine even harder and played up his role of summer. Gardens kept on growing, people loved the swimming and picnicking, and still Fall came. Summer pushed him away and kept shining, afraid of losing his current glory. One day, when he drew out the Sun, he gasped. People began to put out the pumpkins, fake fall leaves, and apple cider jugs; folding away the summer clothes and shoes. Fall had been sneaking up on them. "Fall is coming and they're celebrating it!" Summer fumed. He was tinged green with envy, just like his leaves. Still, Fall came, awakening more and more. Leaves flew and breezes blew. "Fall is coming," a man said. His partner nodded. "It is colder," she noted. Summer grew jealous.

"They're talking about Fall?" he thought. "They should be talking about me!" He pushed himself into every corner, every gap that Fall forget to fill up. One day, Fall stalked up to him, his mantle of colored leaves, woven twigs, fall bird plumage, acorns, apples, and small pumpkins askew. He clutched the folds of his brown robes, which sometimes shimmered into orange or red. His face was twisted in fury and his brown eyes glowed with anger. He had come to argue with Summer as usual. They often forget this after hibernation and repeat their bickering over and over again.

"You! You fool!" he said angrily, flailing his arms. "It's my turn for making a season! Why do you push me away? Every time I make the weather cool, you shine the Sun! When the leaves fall, they're green! People like fall too, you know!" Summer folded his arms across his yellow robe-clad chest, glaring with his bright blue eyes.

"People like me too! I bring warm weather and good crops!" he said, tilting up his chin. Fall flew into a passion, ripping an apple off from his mantle and hurling it at Summer.

"As do I!" Fall cried. Summer usually would be surprised at this outburst. Fall was shy and soft, like Spring. Winter bites more and Summer began to think Fall was a little like Winter.

"It's not fair!" Summer retorted haughtily. "I'm not ready to let go yet. Look, I have the Sun! And don't you see how that boy is pointing at it?" He jabbed his finger at a boy holding his dog. Fall snorted.

"They have long since gotten over the summer. See that lady putting on a jacket? I bet she won't do that in summer!"

"Fine!!" Summer shouted.

"Fine!" Fall screeched. They stomped away. Each day, Summer made the sky sharper and bluer, made the Sun glow like a pale yellow flower, and made the light barks and brown barks contrast with the beautiful pastel green light leaves. Fall added as much chill he could against the Sun and pushed puffy clouds into the stark sky. He shook bare the weak trees and breathed a slight, nippy breeze. He made the animals drowsy with hibernation and made the birds migrate away silently. They fought against each other until Fall was too strong and Summer was too sleepy.

Then suddenly, Summer grew tired of this and wanted to pester Fall more one year. They didn't know that this would make everything change. After one of their silent standoffs in Nature, Summer met with Fall. "Now, you see, I have done more!!" Summer boasted. Jealousy tinged his voice and his eyes were troubled. He couldn't make the chill go away. He knew he had to give up-it was the cycle-but he would stick around as long as he could, just like he would always do. Fall stepped back. He laughed sourly.

"You are selfish and stupid! I pity you! You think you're always the best. Isn't that right?"

Summer clenched his fists.

"Well, you *aren't*!"

"I know I am!!" Summer shrieked. *Squeaky squawk, squeaky scrub.* A girl on a bike, dressed in a bright pink hoody with dark blue jeans glanced around, beaming, looking at all of the sights and wonders of nature. Her bike bumped on one flat tire. Summer and Fall watched.

"This is it! She will judge which one of us is better!" whispered Fall. Summer drew himself up.

"You poor, silly person!" he laughed. "Children love summer more! They always like the summer," He straightened his tilted crown. It was decorated with green leaves, flowers, berries, summer crops, and twisted, green, whippy branches. The bright summer feathers of birds perched jauntily out of it, bent crookedly. Fall wagged a finger at him.

"You...you fool!!" he sputtered. "You're just a jealous fool! You have an ego bigger than the Sun!" Summer shoved him and at the same time, he made the wind blow gently. Fall tried to put Summer in a headlock. The girl stopped to feel the breeze rushing through her hair and touching her face with refreshing coolness. She stared at the bright blue sky and its puffy white clouds. She looked up at the glorious sun, all nice and yellow, like the dandelion she had just biked by.

"This is the weather I've always dreamed of," she said, smiling to herself. "It's not too hot, not too cold, and perfect and beautiful," The quarrelling seasons stopped and abruptly broke apart from their wrestling, stopping to listen. She looked at them and laughed softly.

"You two should work together, not fight. This is beautiful! Look at what you have created!" She spread her arms wide, gesturing to everything. "Look at how the Sun filters through the beautiful green leaves and feel the good wind, which is refreshing to me after biking. And see how the stark sky and bare trees reflect on the clean pond. It's like a mirror! It's peaceful, quiet, and the chill is nippy and makes me feel playful! From now on, work together and please everyone with this! It doesn't have to be just one season being better than the other!" Summer, who was half-doubtful, stomped his foot at the girl.

"But what if Fall doesn't want to?!" he asked. "What if he doesn't *like* my ideas?"

"You have to believe, Summer," she replied. "Believe that you know what's best for us and believe you and Fall are meant to share equal parts in the seasonal cycle. Trust in him and believe that he knows how to incorporate the right parts of fall into summer, and have faith that you can do it together," She stared at them with her dark eyes, making Summer and Fall feel somehow ashamed and immature. Her gaze shifted between them, as if she was waiting for more questions. Fall hesitated.

"What if we overcome one another or we don't know how to combine our seasons? How will we know what our combinations will look like?" The girl thought for a moment, patiently accepting their questions. Her long, dark hair was swept off to the side as a short breeze reached her.

"Inspire each other," she answered. "Just take the best parts of fall that everyone likes and put that in with the best parts of summer. Trust me; it will look good no matter what. Maybe using that can inspire you guys to make a new thing. It's like paint, when someone mixes them to make a new color. Look for inspiration in your seasons. And when you inspire each other, you won't overcome one or another," Fall and Summer looked at the girl in admiration.

"But what should we do when our combinations turn out bad and nobody likes it? What if there are no good parts in it?" Summer asked, wringing his hands.

"Then you have to change it to the humans' liking. Your goal together should be to make dreams come true. you said yourself that you make weather for people to enjoy. Fulfill the wishes of the people because they look upon nature for inspiration for beauty. Beauty is their dream, so give it to them. You have plenty of it in your hands and if you combine it, it will look so beautiful!" the girl said, smiling.

"Who knew we created so much beauty out of our quarrelling?" Fall asked, laughing. "Without the help of our little friend, we would have gone on, not knowing anything!"

"Yes. And now we can help people believe, dream, and inspire just like you did," Summer said, beaming. The girl grinned and nodded. She settled into her bike.

"From now on, when you are just about to wake up and bring fall, we will merge together. We will cooperate until I am too tired to continue and you are fully awake and powerful," Summer declared. They shook their hands, agreeing, and struck a pledge to be peaceful and that they would never forget to be peaceful. When they looked up, the girl was gone. All they could see was her head a tiny dot against the falling gold leaves, nodding at the scenery and peddling on her one-flat-tire bike as if nothing had happened.

And that was how the peaceful Indian Summers started.