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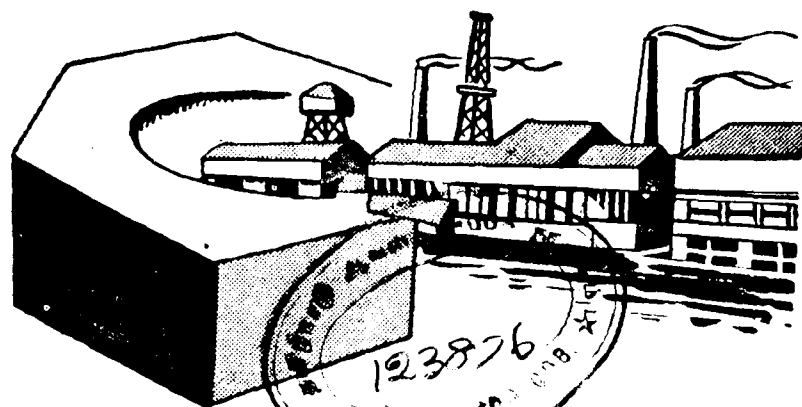


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CHANGE TO METRIC SYSTEM

INDIA MAGAZINE

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FEBRUARY 1960

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Stories

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Feb. '60

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EDITORIAL

India Magazine

LEADING MONTHLY FOR HOME AND FAMILY

FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

VOLUME 4 } FEBRUARY 1960 { No. 12

WOMEN'S DEMANDS

FEW sensible men will dispute the fact that our women will have to travel the hard way before attaining equality of status with men. On paper they have all the rights and privileges which men enjoy. The Constitution specifically forbids discrimination against anyone on the ground of sex. It is more than twelve years since India became independent. Our leaders never tire of stressing the parity of status between men and women.

When all is said and done, we have to recognize that it is a man's world still. Even in large cities where civilization is so advanced and discrimination is presumed to be non-existent, women are afraid to go out alone during certain hours. Along with freedom from hunger there must be freedom from fear.

At the All-India Women's Conference, held the other day in Madras, pointed attention was drawn to the serious handicaps under which women are labouring. For instance, the curse of dowry and the evil of prostitution have for ages been dragging them in the mire. How many families have been ruined by the pernicious dowry system; how many maidens have remained unmarried all their lives, wasting their sweetness on the desert air?

Innumerable girls have been driven into the world's oldest profession. At the root of the trouble is deep economic distress. And, then, we have any number of unscrupulous men who decoy young helpless girls and force them into a life of shame. Legislation against these two evils seems stringent enough but there are loopholes which must be stopped.

COVER PAGE STORY

Unconventional was her mode of life. Poverty drove her into the arms of a rich man and she thought that she could stay happy...

THE SANDS OF TIME

by C. R. BALACHANDER

SRRIRAM, a young man of thirty, had come to the city to have a gay fling. His village of Moyyur was three hundred miles away, quiet and undisturbed by the hectic pleasures of urban civilization. In that village life went on at the speed of a country-cart and everything was as before—say, fifty years ago. The food was the same, the habits of the people seldom changed and the usual festivities came off at stated intervals and seasons. Only in respect of two things was there a change. The number of idlers had slightly increased, and the gossip of the villagers had more spice and variety than before. The people of the village had more things to talk about since they were jointly subscribing to a daily paper. The postman brought three issues together every time, and there was one old man by name Vikram who scanned each issue of the *Daily Events* from page one to page last, and he would read out important extracts to a group of villagers who would gather every evening under the shade of the huge peepul tree.

This Vikram was a little dictator in his circle, imperious and autocratic. The villagers respected him because he had a lot of money and knew what was hap-

pening in the world. His word was law and woe unto anyone who openly defied him. He could not take his place in the circle of listeners. He would be discredited and branded as an outsider to whom the benefits of the village community would be denied.

Surya, the oil-monger, married a woman outside the fold of his community. He consulted no one in the village and defied all convention. The council of which Vikram was head decided that Surya had set a bad precedent for others and that in punishment for his defiance he should not be allowed to associate with any of the village functions, festivities or matters of administration. Fearing Vikram's wrath, nobody dared to talk with the oil-monger or bought his goods. His business was ruined and the fellow in utter misery murdered his wife and child and hanged himself.

FOR even lesser offences the villagers were excluded from the group that had the privilege of listening to the news items read by Vikram. But lately there were signs of restlessness and a splinter group headed by one, Sama, a retired teacher, set up the standard of revolt. Those who were opposed to the Hitlerism of Vikram formed a circle of their own. They subscribed to the *Daily Events* separately and held their daily meeting at the Kali temple. As a result of this division Vikram

was even more ruthless in dealing with offenders, and he was applauded by the priests and the conservative elements not only in Moyyur but also in the neighbouring villages.

WHEN I say that Sriram hailed from the village of Moyyur one can easily understand how badly he wanted a spell of gaiety in the city. He was tall and curly-headed with a smiling face and a body that was of sturdy build and that was radiant with health and energy. He could bend an iron pipe effortlessly and climb the tallest coconut or palm tree with the agility of a monkey.

He had brought with him lots of money and had no intention of returning to Moyyur before all that was spent. There was a guide who took him to cinemas, fairs, the zoo and the circus. He visited some houses of ill fame and scuttled back to his lodgings in the small hours of the night. When the guide went on demanding more money he pushed him out of his room and warned him not to approach him if he wanted to keep his bones safe inside his body.

It was one of the hottest of evenings with the wind standing still. Not a leaf stirred and the citizens walking along the tarred dusty roads gasped for breath, wiping the perspiration from their foreheads. In every bunk and hotel cold drinks and ice cream were served to numberless customers.

Never before had Sriram experienced such a sweltering lay. He stayed in the air-conditioned room of a hotel for nearly an hour until a polite waiter requested him to make 'or a family who wanted the place for the rest of the evening. "Why not go to the beach, sir?" he said. "You will have a refreshing breeze at least after the sunset."

Sriram thanked the waiter for his suggestion and got into a rickshaw that took him towards the shore. There were shady trees and playgrounds in the fore-shore but this part of the beach was crammed with people. He was too tired and wanted to stretch himself on the sands. There were young men and women sitting too close with children playing about and throwing sand at one another. Some were throwing balls and yet others were flying a kite with a large crowd of youngsters cheering and gesticulating wildly.

HE walked on the sandy beach until he came to a quiet spot where there were two small boats used by fishermen. On the rear side was a vehicular bridge which spanned a small river that opened its mouth into the sea. It was an unfrequented part of the shore as it was far away from the city and there was no easy access to bus or taxi.

For nearly an hour he lay on the sands with closed eyes—

half dreamy and half asleep. The sea breeze had started blowing and he felt a sense of exhilaration and a new strength in his tired body. The sun was fast sinking into the western horizon and the crows and the gulls were noisily winging their way from across the waters.

He sat up and threw up his arms in sheer joy and excitement at this kind of life. He looked about the floor and his heart missed a beat. His big wallet was lying exposed to view all the time he had been dozing. He was tucking it under his thigh when he thought that someone was looking at him. His eyes lit up brightly at the sight of a young woman of dazzling beauty dressed neatly with her hair attractively done in double pigtail. She was of a delicate build and charm that gave the finishing touch to her feminine grace.

"WHY ever should a ravishing beauty like this come here unescorted? What has gone wrong with her or what is she up to?" thought Sriram as he gazed at the fairy-like vision, drinking in her beauty.

He was astonished at the discovery that she was weeping. When it was nearing seven with only a pale moon to shed a feeble light, she rose up, taking her wallet, and walked towards the road. Suddenly she fell, face down. Her wallet dropped on the sand away from her. She was sprawling almost when Sriram ran towards her.

"What is wrong? Can I help?" he asked.

He had a big lemon in his jibba pocket and taking it out squeezed the juice into his cupped palm. He lifted her gently with his left hand and made her sip the juice. She opened her eyes and looked gratefully at him.

SHE then waved him off to indicate that further assistance was not wanted. She tidied up the folds of her saree and stood up. "You are very kind, stranger. It will be great of you if you can guide me to the road and hire some vehicle for me."

This time she rose with some effort and would have fallen but for Sriram's quick aid. He held her hand to steady her. "Walk with me," he said. "When we reach the lights, I shall buy you some hot drink and that will put you right. Don't feel shy. Think that you have a new-found brother. I will see that you reach home safely."

"That is all right. I have not touched food for more than twenty-four hours. If you had not been on the sands, stranger, I would have put an end to all my troubles. Seeing you, I stopped."

Sriram felt a new thrill holding the hand of this woman. "I don't understand you," he remarked. "What had my presence to do with your troubles?"

"I had come here with the intention of getting into the waters until the waves carried me off to death and eternal peace. I quarrelled with the man with whom I was living. He has fallen for another woman and the quarrel gave him an opportunity to beat me and kick me out."

At the edge of the road Sriram persuaded her to sit on a stone culvert. He went towards the lights where a short man was running a bunk and looking for customers. He bought some bread, some bananas and a glass of hot milk. For the glass he deposited a rupee and ran towards the starving woman.

"TAKE these, please, and then tell me your story," he begged.

She gulped the hot milk and then dug her teeth into the loaf. After a pause she seemed to have gained a new life and her face which had been deathly pale began to glow again. But the next instant the radiance died away from her face. "I curse myself for coming back from the sea for life has no attractions. Since, however, help came from unexpected quarters, I am perhaps destined to live. I am already drawn to you as if you are my brother."

"My name is Usha, and I was born of very poor parents who both died last year within a

month of each other. I had read up to the eighth standard and therefore could not secure a job. A very old semi-blind aunt was feeding me. I had fallen in love with a rich young man, Arun by name, and he was helping me with all sorts of presents and cash gifts. One night when he insisted that he must leave the old woman and live with him in a small apartment in a remote part of the city, I agreed though not without hesitation and trepidation.

"BEFORE I went with him I extracted a promise that he must marry me. He agreed to carry out all my wishes as if they were commands. Every night he would come with a load of new things like sarees, jewels, toilette sets and won my heart. We lived together for nine months. Then the frequency of his visits became less and less and I noticed that he became rather bored. He was irritable and snarled at me whenever I tried to talk with him. He even began to beat me and kick me if I questioned his movements.

"For several weeks he gave me no money and I sold all the jewels and other gifts that he had given me. When even this source was exhausted I was curious to find out what he was doing with his money. So I sent a servant woman to trail him to any new lair of his.

"Yes, I succeeded in finding

out who it was that was luring him away from me. It was an actress who was neither very young nor very attractive.

"Day before yesterday I told him about my discovery and asked him point-blank what had become of his promise to marry me. He beat me with a big stick, threw me on the floor and would have strangled me to death but for the sudden knocking on the door. He gave me one last kick with all his force and asking me to go to hell, opened the door and walked out on me. It was the servant woman who had knocked at the door. I asked her to help herself to whatever was left in my residence. Then I dressed myself as smartly as possible and wandered about the wide streets of the city for a whole night.

"I DIDN'T touch food. With all my money and self-respect gone, with no relations to look after me, I was desperate. This evening, I came to this part of the beach and wanted to throw myself into the waters. But it was not to be. I saw you there and was hoping that you would go away. The rest of the story you know."

She shaded her eyes with her right arm and wept.

"Usha, please don't weep. It is God's will that we have been brought together. I am

from the village of Moyyur and my father is very rich there. I came here in search of adventure and romance. I know I have my limitations; I have had my lapses. But since hearing your story, I am determined to turn over a new leaf. May I make a proposal? Marry me. We shall live here for some months and then let us go to the village for a change. I am simple-minded. I don't talk much and what little I have said I have spoken from the heart."

SHE clung to him for affection and support and they sealed their agreement with a long kiss. That night she took him to her apartment and they stayed together.

The next day he was wise enough to suggest that they should move to a different locality in the city. He was right because the landlord and her neighbours were scoffing at her as a woman who was so shameless as to bring another man after driving out her former lover. She was in tears when they openly talked at her and poured their ridicule. How could she explain what had actually happened? He, too, heard all their hard words in silence. She was stupefied and stared about like one gone mad. At night when

they were alone she broke down and told him that she would run back to the sea and end all her troubles. But he hugged her and begged of her not to waste her life. That very same day he moved with her to a suburb twenty miles away where a new house was available. Here she pleaded with him to go away and not to throw himself on a wretch like herself. But he swore that he would marry her, give her a respectable status and thus make himself happy. For the first time she laughed and became her normal self. And in the next week they were married before a registrar.

Six months later, one evening Vikram was reading out the newspaper to his group of devoted listeners when a bullock-cart stopped. Out came Sriram and his wife Usha. All the villagers gaped at them. "Father," said Sriram, addressing Vikram. "Here is my wife Usha."

Vikram was amazed but then he was glad that his son had got hold of a great beauty. But applying his own rule to himself he stopped reading the newspaper from that day and left the village in a month. Sriram and Usha were living happily and undisturbed. †

There is nothing makes a man suspect much, more than to know little, and therefore men should remedy suspicion by procuring to know more, and not keep their suspicions in smother.—BACON.

SHORT STORY

He began to suspect his wife. What was she up to? She had been so easy to win over. Was she then a woman of easy ways?

At

First

By

E. B. Surendranath

Sight

AGAIN and again, he embraced and kissed her when the only passenger in the compartment snored. She too was sleepy but happy but he prodded her into wakefulness. "Remember, Shanti, it is hardly a week since we married. Aren't we on our honeymoon, dearest? Is it not a breach of faith to go to sleep?"

She pulled down his face to hers and gave him a noisy smack. "After all, Mohanlal, my love, where do I sleep? Is it not in your arms? Awake or asleep, we shall always be together, and we shall allow no

one in the world to tear us asunder." Stirring in his arms she tried to keep her eyes open but sleep was overpowering. In the next few minutes she was slumbering peacefully. He looked at the rising swell of her breasts, which she had cared not to cover well even though there was a stranger in the compartment. But their co-passenger had turned his back and was totally oblivious of what the lovers were doing.

He bent down and brought his cheek lovingly against hers. The silken feel of it made him ecstatic. He envied her ability to fall asleep at any moment,

He courted Morpheus in vain. By sheer force of habit he kept awake twenty hours of the day. He was such a light sleeper that he would be up at the slightest noise.

He had met Shanti at a carnival and it was a case of love at first sight. Her pleasing figure, ripe beauty and melodious voice charmed him and he resolved then and there to find out more about her and make her his own. When Destiny itself was prepared to aid him who could prevent their meeting? Shoba, a mutual friend, had introduced them.

From that day on they met regularly. She was a film fan and he too discovered a new interest in pictures though he had never liked to spend much of his time in theatres. But she had converted him and changed his tastes. At first they exchanged greetings when leaving the theatre. Afterwards they went together and he would buy the tickets in advance, reserving their seats in the most comfortable, dark corner where other eyes could not probe too deep.

After a fortnight of such joint sittings, he made bold to hug her as the hero of the film ventured to do so on the screen. What was his joy when she pressed her body close to his and kissed him softly with her moist lips!

She didn't object when he took her out on long walks

which usually ended in a park. They would sit far into the night on a bench, huddled together, stealing kisses, gazing at the far-off city lights which stabbed into the inky blackness of the night.

One night she slept in his arms and when he woke up with a start and looked at his wrist-watch he was dismayed at the discovery that it was 2 a. m. When he shook her and roused her into wakefulness she laid her head on his shoulder to go to sleep again. Only when he pinched her hard on the arm did she get up. "It is 2 a. m. Supposing I take you to your house what will your parents say? I am afraid we have to walk three miles as no taxi or any other vehicle will be available now."

She gave him a seductive smile. "My parents will think that I have stayed with one of my girl friends. That is not the problem. But I am feeling chill and the park is not a safe place."

"It is not," agreed Mohanal. What was worse, he knew that bad characters roamed the city at that ghostly hour and supposing they took notice of them...?

He began to scratch his head in bewilderment, when she tugged at his shirt sleeve. "Let us go to your room," she whispered.

Yes, she was wise enough to make that suggestion. He was occupying a large room on the fourth floor of a building for bachelors. There was a disused staircase in the backyard which led straight up to his room. He had often described this to her and she remembered every minute detail. The building was just two streets off—just a stone's throw from the park.

In five minutes they were safe in that room but he was ashamed of the disorderly way in which he had kept his things. The soap was not in its box, his tooth-brush was lying on his bed, the newspapers were crumpled and scattered sheet by sheet.

She looked around with interest and pleasure but he was ashamed of the untidy nature of his room. She took a broom, swept aside all the things, and restored a little order in a few minutes. She asked him to switch off the light and when he offered to sleep on the floor, giving her his bed, she came down stealing up to him and snuggled for warmth.

EXHAUSTED, they slept on until it was well past noon. They still lay smiling at each other but in ecstatic contentment they would not get up. It was evening again when they ventured down. She hurried home telling some false story to her mother. She knew very well that her daughter could protect herself

if need be and made no comment.

After this incident she visited him on a dozen occasions in his room. But when he thought and had reasons to believe that the other lodgers had got wind of this romance he stopped her. In the following month they were married much to the happiness of her parents. As desired by them the wedding was celebrated in their village and they spent a week there, enchanted by the calm atmosphere and the sylvan surroundings.

He had already rented a very small house in a town thirty miles away from the city where he was employed. Conveyance was no difficult problem. The bus and the electric train took him to the city and back at any time of the day...

And the railway journey marked the first phase of their honeymoon. Home life was equally full of little surprises and pleasures. They were invited by friends and relatives and the couple invited them in turn. It was a continuous round of feasts for six months.

He had to work hard now and put by something against the rainy day. So he went early and used to come late at night. She had been to the pictures one evening and he had to wait for her. The old woman next door who handed him the key gave

him a wink and beckoned to him to come inside.

"Mohanlal, every day as soon as your back is turned at 8 a. m. a young man rather lean and tall knocks at your door and your wife lets him in. I hear them talking merrily. Then there is silence for one or two hours and your wife lets him out at 4 p. m. He hurries away and my impression is that he does not like to be seen.

"I tackled your wife about the visitor. You know, I am curious in all such matters but I am harmless, I assure you. Your wife got angry at my question and asked me to mind my business. But I never quarrel with her and am friendly enough. Don't you see she leaves the key with me for you?"

Mohanlal stiffened. "Is that so, auntie? Did that man come today? Did you see him?"

"Yes, by all means, Mohan. In fact they went to the pictures together," she said, grinning.

Once inside his room, he waxed indignant at this outrage. The woman who had often lulled him into a sense of false security with her assurances that her life was dedicated to his happiness and well being, must be a cheap woman of easy ways. How else could it be explained that he had won her without any difficulty or trial?

He turned hot all over as the hours ticked by. She returned home at eleven with a care-worn look. When she saw that he was angry she quietly slipped into bed and went to sleep. He wanted to beat her black and blue but when she flung her arms round his neck and drew him he forgot his fury for a while.

The next morning he told her that he would return very late that night. He went to the railway station staring blankly at the crowds that the trains took in and disgorged. But he didn't board any of them. At 12 noon he retraced his steps home and knocked at the door. When he heard, as the old lady next door had described, the loud laughter of his wife and another man, he boiled with rage and all his love for the woman was gone.

When he repeated the knock his wife, looking scared, opened the door. In the hall was sitting a young man eating a large plate of rice and curry.

"WHAT is the meaning of this and who is this...lover of yours?" he roared.

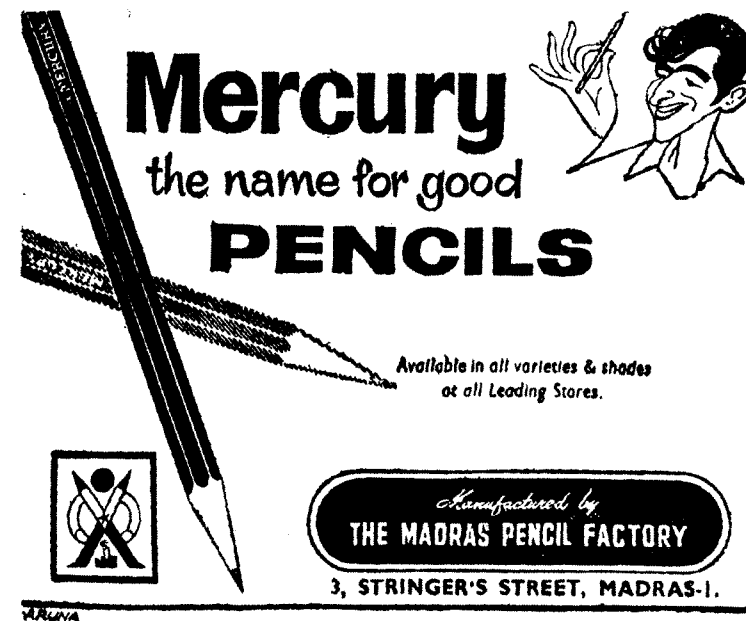
He suddenly became jealous and a mad fury took hold of him. He pounced upon the visitor, grabbed him by the neck and shook him till his teeth rattled. After knocking him down he turned to his wife but she held up her hand, grasping the situation.

She understood his feelings and hastened to explain. It was her brother who had been released from jail for taking sides in a village faction. She apologized to him for not having mentioned him in her talks. Her parents too had not talked to him about their son for the truth that he was in jail might spoil the chances of their daughter's wedding.

Her brother, Kripal, was very much devoted to her, she went on. And soon after his arrival he came straight to see his happily married sister. Her problem was how to introduce

her brother to her husband. She went in, brought an album of her family photos and showed how Kripal had grown from boyhood to manhood.

Mohanlal apologized to his wife for entertaining such unworthy suspicions and welcomed her brother. He told him of his own elder brother who had once lost his temper and entered into a street brawl with the result that he was in jail for six months. He would not let Kripal return home for six months until Shanti was delivered of a male child.



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THE WAY TO WOO SLEEP

MARY had been asleep for several hours when a dog's barking woke her. She tried to get back to sleep but 15 minutes later gave up the struggle. Quietly, she donned her dungarees and T-shirt and tiptoed into the kitchen. There, between 2 and 4 a.m. she painted her cupboards a bright, shiny yellow.

Finally, with a sigh of contentment, she crawled back into bed. Five minutes later she was sound asleep. Next morning she felt cheerful and rested.

Painting kitchen cupboards is not everybody's dish, during the day or at night. Mary happens to enjoy it. And she finds that nightwork has advantages; the youngsters are safe in their beds and the phone doesn't ring.

Nor does she worry about the common bugaboo of insomniacs: that she won't get "enough" sleep. She is a mature woman, close to 40, and she knows nature sometimes doles out to her a few hours of wakefulness each week and she looks forward to that time eagerly.

It's her private bonus hours that she can spend as she pleases.

Many adults, psychologists say, suffer from insomnia because of worry. The worry, ironically is not always about money, health or children but

in a staggering number of cases about sleep!

We are so sleep-conscious we watch our sleep intake as we watch our food intake.

There is one prerequisite for sound sleep—lack of tension. Complete rest comes only to the unharassed mind, to the body free of tension.

Let's assume you don't worry, you are relaxed. You've had a satisfying day. And still you can't sleep. Why is that?

If you are in reasonably good health say experts, you may simply need less sleep than you used to. Nature knows best and it won't let you get too little sleep, or too much. But it may decide that you don't need as much sleep as you think you do.

Of course, there may be days or weeks when, due to illness or emergency, you really can't get enough sleep. Again, don't worry. Once the emergency has passed you can usually catch up on lost sleep in one or two long nights. There is no such thing as accumulating a sleep-debt.

Sleep must be wooed quietly and gently and with much patience. People cannot rush into sleep as they hurry to the office. People can merely give nature a hand in getting ready and then, if it is interrupted, make the best of it.

Short Story

By V. J. Ananth

R
I L
V I O
A N V
L E
S

[Two beautiful women loved the same man. Of course, one of them had a legitimate claim to his heart but he lost his to the other woman. The triangle was quite a tangle !]

THE neighbours all pricked up their ears as the two women were quarrelling. Hema, the occupant of the flat, was a young beauty with cattish grey eyes that had the power of mesmerising males of any age. She was tall and graceful and though she wore no ornaments except a necklace, she stood like a statue of gold full of life and animation.

The other woman was Bhooma, plumpish and full of mature charms. She was ten years older than Hema but she had a dignity which the other lacked, and her regal manner compelled the respect of others. She was past thirty-five but she knew the art of preserving her figure and keeping herself desirable.

The two women were shouting at each other and the neighbours were interestedly listening and piecing out the facts. The bone of contention between them was Vyas, the husband of Bhooma. That there was a clandestine love affair was very much in evidence. He was of course very affectionate towards his wife. Their little daughter, Sheila, was the pupil of his eye. But love for his wife and daughter did not keep Vyas always at home. His heart wandered in the direction of Hema who was secretary in a business concern situated very near to his own.

Hema was not much of a talented girl. It was beauty that recommended her for the top position as secretary to Manager Randhir of the Alpha Textiles. He had to keep correcting her spelling mistakes and to teach grammar to her. There were more intelligent competitors for the job but Randhir gave it to Hema in anticipation of making her his mistress. He was not disappointed. He rented a splendid flat for her and paid all her expenses.

But in his absence she brought in Vyas. This was how she lured him into her snare. A storm approaching the ferocity of a cyclone was raging and most of the offices and companies closed down early in the evening to enable their employees to return home before the weather became worse. Randhir had been on a visit to his home town and he had instructed Hema to attend to his important letters. By the time she came out of her company premises, it was terribly dark. A strong wind was howling and the rain was stinging the face of anyone who ventured out. Umbrellas could not stand the fury of the gale.

HEMA had walked a few yards with her silken umbrella on when the wind knocked it off. It flew like a parachute and fell on a tiled roof far behind her. In a few minutes she was drenched and soaked to the skin. When Vyas who was driving his car saw her in this sad plight he

pulled up and asked her in a loud voice: "Why not get in Miss...Miss Hema?" I shall drive you to your house. You know, it is on my way. Don't stand on formalities, please. This is not the time. You can't get a taxi either for love or for money."

SHE hesitated for just a second.

Vyas was the Manager of a rival textile company, and himself and her own boss, Randhir, had the relations of a snake and mongoose. But Vyas was decidedly more handsome and she had often felt his eyes roving over her body and scorching her flesh. Randhir was old and his body sagged. Vyas had the figure and firmness of an athlete. She had often smiled back at him whenever they chanced upon each other. She had once tried the age-old trick of dropping her kerchief when she met him but instead of restoring her article, he gave her his own fine broad silk kerchief, with the words: "Here is your kerchief, Miss Hema. Pleased to meet you."

But Randhir had noticed them exchanging greetings once or twice. He almost growled at his secretary. "He is my worst enemy, Hema, and if I find you talking with him again I will show you the door. And there will be an end of our present relationship."

Hema shuddered at the hatred and grimness which Randhir

packed into his words. She simply nodded her head to indicate compliance with his warning. But the more Randhir hated Vyas the more her heart yearned for the latter.

As Vyas drove the car through the roaring wind and the flying branches of the trees, he could not help looking at the woman whose wet clinging dress revealed her voluptuous body. She noted how his eyes were glued on herself but she was not frightened. She was flattered. She knew that he knew all about her relationship with Randhir and tried to hide nothing.

"If Randhir had been here, he would have taken me in his car to my home. You know, he has gone to his home town and is not expected back till Monday."

VYAS took the hint as an invitation to see her in her flat. When she asked him to come up and have a cup of tea he spoke not a word and followed her, leaving the car in Randhir's small garage at the corner of the street. The luxury and coziness of the apartment took his breath away. He was admiring the photos of Hema in various seductive poses, hanging on the wall when she slipped behind from an inner room, dressed in the flimsiest of sarees, her face glowing with new make-up.

"Hey, I am pleased that you are looking at my photos. Tell me,

honestly, am I really pretty?" she asked him in a low tone.

He turned round with a laugh. "Let me compare the original with the photos. I am sorry..." he said.

She frowned. "I don't follow you," she stammered.

"It is this, Hema, The photos have not done justice to the dazzling beauty of the original and here is the humble tribute of this visitor."

In the next instant he grabbed her in his arms and kissed her hard on the lips. She pretended to be annoyed and angry and struggled for a while. "What is the meaning of this?" she demanded.

"The meaning of this is that this humble self is crazy about you and not for all the world will I give you up." This time she was beaming with a smile and melted into his arms. Heart pounded against heart as if echoing the violence of the wind and rain that tore through the streets outside. Vyas forgot that he had a devoted wife waiting anxiously for him.

From that day Hema and Vyas met secretly, sometimes in her flat when Randhir was away, but often in hotel rooms. During week-ends she would tell Randhir that she had to visit her ailing grandfather who was living in a

distant town but she would spend a few hours with Vyas outside the city and come back. They were madly in love with each other and became reckless. They had to meet each day at some hour or other.

When Bhooma was emptying her husband's coat pockets before sending the coat to the laundry, she took out a small photo of Hema and Vyas and that was a tell-tale snapshot. She was sitting on his knee and he had his right arm lovingly over her shoulder.

Armed with this photo, Bhooma went straight to Hema's flat to have it out with her. That was how the quarrel began. "You husband-stealer!" she shouted as Hema repeatedly denied having set her eyes on Vyas. "What do you say to this photo? You wretch! Another word, and I will kill you!"

The neighbours were shocked at these words but sudden silence descended on the room and they were mystified.

THAT night Vyas knew that his wife was seized of his secret affair. He was trying to pacify her with assurances of his eternal devotion. She was large-hearted enough not to tell him about her discovery and her visit to Hema's flat to have a fling at her with the photo. "I lost my head for a while, dear," he was saying. "I know now that you are the most

ideal and perfect wife. Won't you forgive me with a kiss?"

He clung to her shoulder and kissed her ardently on her ivory neck when there was a loud knock on the door. When Vyas opened it he was terrified at the sight of a Police Inspector. "I am sorry, Mr. Vyas, but I have to do my duty. That is your wife Bhooma, I presume. (Turning to her) Did you, Mrs. Vyas, visit the flat of Miss Hema, in Gana Mandhir Street?"

BHOOMA faintly nodded her head and at once covered her face with her hands. The Inspector advanced towards her with two constables following him. "Mrs. Bhooma Vyas, I arrest you on a charge of murdering Miss H. Hema, and the neighbours of the deceased bear witness to the fact."

Bhooma screamed in terror but was hardly able to say anything coherent. Vyas tried to prevent the arrest but she was remanded into custody for a whole week. The police made a thorough investigation and a smart private detective, Ganguly, was commissioned by Vyas to find out the truth. It was Ganguly who put the police on the right track of the criminal. When the women were arguing hotly Randhir had crept quietly and hidden himself behind the door. He listened to Bhooma's charges and when she went out, leaving the photograph behind, he taxed

Hema with disloyalty and stabbed her to death with a long pen-knife. The neighbours, unaware of Randhir's arrival, thought that Bhooma carried out her threat and murdered Hema, her rival in love.

When Randhir was arrested, he made a clean confession. The photograph, left by Bhooma, confirmed his suspicions. He would not have minded if Hema had slept with some other man but her affair with his rival was an unforgivable crime in his view. Hema begged of him to pardon her offence but he suffered a mental black-out. He knocked her head against the wall and then she began to yell and run. He pursued her round the room and stabbed her all over with a pen-knife which belonged to her. He kept quiet when the police arrested Mrs. Vyas for his sense of revenge was satisfied.

Ganguly then told the story of his investigations. He noted that there was another girl,

Saru, who worked as chief typist in Randhir's office. She was as good-looking as Hema though she was not so vivacious. He watched her movements and saw Randhir going to her apartment. The owner of the building being a friend of his, Ganguly gathered from him the interesting information that Randhir paid the rent and was visiting her regularly. That friend introduced Ganguly to Saru and in no time the detective won her confidence. She told him that she it was who had told of the romance between Hema and Vyas and alerted Randhir. Late one night her boss walked in with a haggard look and told her how he had murdered Hema after the discovery of the photo. Then realising the mistake in having made this revelation, he bribed her into silence by promoting her as his secretary.

As soon as Bhooma was released and subsequently given a clean bill of honour, Vyas took her and Sheila on a long tour. †

Too often are close relationships founded on dislike and envy called friendships, for we are bound to those we hate almost as much as to those we love. Perhaps hatred is even a stronger tie than affection: it is more lasting, and like love, seeks out its object, yearning to dwell in its shadow.

—DOGABERT D. RUNES

SHORT
STORY

The Past Rolled Back

By
C. Ram Manohar

[The shadows of the past pursued her until she met him.
And she feared he would change his mind...]

WHEN I met Kamla she was twenty-five years. She was beautiful by all standards. Of medium height, with doe-like eyes, an ever smiling face and over-large breasts, she caught my fancy at once. She often came to a cloth store and then waited at the bus stop.

I travelled by the very bus that she took and found opportunities to stand behind her at the very stop. She wore the latest in style and from her saree and blouse exuded an indefinable smell of perfume. She was aware that I was feasting my eyes on her body but she was far from angry with me. On the contrary, I thought I saw

an encouraging smile though it flickered for just a second or two.

One evening when the shadows were gathering fast and the street lights were not yet switched on, she struggled through a crowd and hurriedly got into the bus. Before she ascended the last step of the bus an envelope slipped from a parcel which she had under her arm dropped on the muddy floor.

A man had stepped on it with his boot and I was quick to recover it. I wiped the dirt from it with my handkerchief as if it was a sacred object and then looked at the address written on it. The letters had

become blurred on account of the trampling under the man's boot. Then I understood. It was an old cover with the flap gone. A small pin held the open end. It took me some ten minutes to decipher the address: K. Kamla Bai, 33, 3rd Street, Opposite Clock Tower.

[I FELT the cover and thought that some old papers must have been folded inside. Anyhow here was a chance to meet the woman who was constantly in my mind, and restore to her that old envelope. I was curious to know who she was. I toyed with the idea of opening the envelope and finding out some particulars about her but second thoughts prevented me from doing such a mean thing. The name and address of the woman were clearly mentioned on the cover and I had no business to pry into any of her secrets behind her back.]

It was nearly nine in the night when I reached her residence—which was a small front portion—the right wing of a dilapidated old house. There was no light in the front room but I saw a bulb burning in the inner one, and then I gave a gentle tap. Through the crevice in the door, I saw her stepping up gracefully. She turned on the light in the front room and opened the door. When she saw me she seemed to be confused and shocked. Her eyes were red with weeping and so was her small pert nose. Had anyone beaten her? Could it

be her husband? Was it proper of me to intrude on her privacy?

"Well," she said, unable to say anything more for, what could she say to a man who was nothing more than a stranger though she might have met him several times recently?

Without any formality I entered her front room and this move almost scared her stiff. But I spoke reassuringly. "A thousand apologies for interrupting you, madam," I said. "At the bus stop near the Vinayak temple you may remember, you got into the bus. While climbing you dropped this cover and I have come here to restore it to you."

"You see, to trace your residence was easy because your name and address are noted on the cover. The contents, I suppose, are intact. And here it is for whatever it is worth."

She snatched it eagerly from my hand with a broad, unmistakable smile. Her hands trembled as she removed the pin and took out three hundred-rupee notes.

"How can I thank you, Mr...?" she stammered.

"Narain," I introduced myself. "But what is there to thank me for? Any other man with a sense of decency would

have done the same thing, Now, with your permission I shall take leave..."

She stood at the entrance, barring my way. "Please don't go so soon," she pleaded. "You have saved me from a very awkward situation. This money I had saved to pay for the sewing machine which I had purchased on credit. That is my only source of livelihood, you know. And if I don't pay tomorrow, I will be deprived of my only means of livelihood. I took the amount from my savings account in the bank and I had asked my creditor to call tomorrow morning."

SHE went on talking in that strain, gushing with gratitude. She put me at my ease and we entered into a conversation as if we had known each other for years. She was earning nearly a hundred rupees, sometimes a little more, by stitching petticoats and other wear for women and children. Her tailoring was so perfect and precise that most of the women in the neighbourhood gave their patronage. She was alone—an orphan—and she was running her business with that sewing machine in her residence. She was assisted by a middle-aged servant woman who went back to her home in the evening.

She persuaded me to take some cakes and hot milk and before I left her at eleven that night we had become fast friends

and I had given her a promise to meet her every day. I satisfied myself that there were no prying eyes to watch us. Her part of the residence was separate and self-contained. I was working as a clerk in a huge chinaware shop but in the evenings I was free.

That night I couldn't sleep. My close contacts with her physical presence for two hours and the liveliness of her talk and charming manners had captivated me. When I closed my eyes she appeared before me and dissolved into a luminous smile and filled my very being.

The next evening I took six yards of voile to her residence and asked her to stitch some jackets for my sister. She smiled mischievously and asked about the measurements. I too burst out laughing. "She is exactly like yourself. She won't mind if the jacket is slightly loose or tight."

She laughed again and remarked. "Shall I recall, Mr. Narain, what you said last night—that you were alone in this world with no parents, no sister, no brother and no wife? Surely no sister could have been born in the interval!"

THEN I explained with a merry twinkle that I had to find an excuse for meeting her. And what could be more appropriate than this?

"Please don't find excuses. You have every right to come here and chat with me, Narain. There was a time..." she said and suddenly stopped to avert her face and wipe the tears that moistened her eyes.

"Yes, tell me your story," I said.

She buried her face in her hands and wept. "I shall tell it if you promise not to change your opinion of me," she sobbed.

BEFORE I knew what I had done

I took her in my arms and kissed her on the mouth. She did not protest and lay in my arms for a while. "Narain dearest, whatever you may think of me, this is my story. When I was only nineteen, people said I was the most beautiful girl. I wanted to marry my neighbour Kishen who used to come to my room without my mother's knowledge every night and sleep with me. He solemnly promised to marry me. But he was a rich boy and his parents married him to a plain-looking girl in the city and he went there to live with her and assist her father who was a dealer in dyes and paints.

"I was heart-broken, almost crazy over the exit of my lover. People said I was a bad girl and my mother, to avoid a scandal, sold me to a very old man in marriage. He was a pitiless miser and engaged me to cook

and help his two old wives who were always quarrelling. To our house a young man by name Vinod used to come and he tempted me to run away with him. I lived with him for some months and he deserted me, taking away all my jewels.

"There was no question of returning to my husband. In fact, I hated him from the bottom of my heart. And very soon he died. I worked for an old woman who was a pavement vendor of cheap cakes. For three years I lived with her and she protected me against several road-side Romeos who wanted to seduce me. Bit by bit I saved a small fortune and rented this residence two years ago. A shop owner who used regularly to buy sweets from me gave me this sewing machine on credit. Today I am able to keep body and soul together. Now, Narain, I know you are going to hate me."

My hands tightened round her waist. "There are men who are wicked and stoop to folly," I told her. "But you have been more sinned against than sinning, my dearest. Well, Kamla, let us bury our dead past and find happiness together."

We married very soon and have had no cause to quarrel with each other. Our two children could not find a more devoted mother. *

LIFE'S LIKE THAT!

YOU want to be conscious when you invite people to dinner. If the invitee is fairly known to you, then there is not much difficulty. But sometimes it so happens that you get involved in a situation where the only way out is an invitation to dinner.

'We would love it if you come over to our house,' you put it tentatively that at the most what you will have to provide for is nothing more elaborate than a high tea. You go on mentally reckoning about pastry and a slightly expensive brand of tea for the afternoon brew.

But you find the response overwhelming from your guest-designate.

'Ah, sure it would be a great pleasure,' he gushes forth. 'The trouble is, my afternoons

are all taken. I could make dinner however.'

And then you are stuck with it. You cannot plead that your wife is away or that you have no time. That would be too thin. Trying a last attempt at averting it, you say, 'Won't it be jolly fine? But we are going to the movies tonight!' And then you pause significantly.

But you are in for it all the same. The invitee persists. 'Too bad you are busy tonight.' He flips the pages of his pocket diary and almost shouts with joy which you suspect is somewhat vindictive. 'But I can make it tomorrow. You are lucky, for tomorrow night is the only free night for me this week and you are so lucky to get it. Shall we say eight o'clock tomorrow night?'

There is no need to answer that question, for your friend does not give you any time to change your mind by saying that he has to hurry off to somewhere for something. From that point on you are in for something you scarcely bargained for. You have not had the time to consult your wife about this dinner and she is the first either to be annoyed with you or pity you and between the two reactions there is little to choose. But being a good woman she agrees to cook the dinner.

The whole house is turned upside down. Children are given their dinner earlier and sent to bed. The wife labours at the menu and you pace up and down irresolutely in the living-room. There you hear the creak and you know your hour of trial is at hand.

'I made it,' breezes in the guest shoving his umbrella into your hands. 'Smart work! Dinner is all ready, I suppose, how hungry I am! He goes on twittering like a bird that has found its voice for the first time. 'I must get off quick from here—tomorrow is a working day, you know? Shall we sit for dinner?'

So, you sit for dinner. He toys with 'chips' and lets you know that fried things are fattening. He calls for a glass of water the moment he puts a

bit of chutney on the tip of his tongue. He says your drinking-water is delightfully cool and the buttermilk just the right kind of thing.

He gives you a lecture on nutrition and diet and tells you blood-curdling stories of the evil effects of an unbalanced diet all the time looking accusingly at your waistline with an admonition—'Don't worry. At your age such things happen.' He compliments your wife on her cooking but finds fault with your appetite slightly hinting you had something to eat out of doors after office hours all of which is highly infuriating but you have to pretend to enjoy it with as pleasant a face as you can imagine.

If you have a cat he steps on its tail and tells you that your locality is not a place for pets. The only possession of yours he seems to like is your radio because it is silent at the moment. Stuffing a king-size 'paan' into his mouth he picks up your umbrella as he turns to depart. When you gently take away your umbrella and offer his own, he laughs—'It always happens that way, I pick up an old umbrella in the place of my brand new one. Ha, ha, ha, life's like that.'

And then it is your turn to wonder whether it was really his umbrella that you got in the bargain. The dinner is over—but the doubt lingers. *

Married

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In

Heaven

by A. Sarvothama Pai

Theirs was a romance which reformers would have enthused over and young men and maidens would love to read about !

THE setting Sun was spinning a crimson border to the moon on the grassy surface of the river bank picking up pebbles and throwing them at random into the water. Beside her stood the lanky figure of a young man. They were Gorojini and Suryaraman.

Gorojini was the Drill Mistress in the Standard Middle School where none in the staff roll excepting the young Headmaster Suryaraman was a male. Though she had just joined the institution she could command the respect of the students including the obstreperous specimens as only during her class they could escape the tedium of

the claustrophobic atmosphere and be in their full spirits—running, jumping, hooting and moving in the green lawns like colourful birds quite oblivious of mathematical formulae, rules of grammar and spellings, historical dates and nomenclature. Her playful and unrigid attitude towards them was in marked contrast with other teachers who badly treated the ‘young devils’ with stretched canes. They never had to write impositions or rack their brains to remember tough lessons during ‘Drill Periods.’

Gorojini was not perhaps a laging beauty but certainly without any physical incongru-

ities like the bicuspid of the English teacher Sarada or the squint eye of the History teacher Chandramathi both of whom used to cast hostile looks on her. Under the spell of her pervasive and engaging charm no wonder the young Suryaraman could not view her with the seriousness of a superior. Gorojini obsessed him with the result he had to fall head over ears in love with her. The love, which at the outset was a mere feeling could not remain concealed for long and by degrees he made it clear to her. Perhaps it was not unnatural on her part also to have returned this fine sentiment for in Suryaraman she discovered her life-mate with his many attributes: profound learning, necessary wherewithal for a decent living and respect in the society.

AFTER the school hours Gorojini and Suryaraman rambled on the river bank and were lost in exquisite moments. Someone scanned them at that spot and soon the unravelled affair was widely discussed and debated by the people at large. When it was about to become a scandal Gorojini's parents summoned the Headmaster to their home and requested him to rescue their daughter from public obloquy. There was only one solution for it; their marriage. Coming as he was from a superior caste Suryaraman had a serious apprehension whether his parents would accord their consent to the alliance. Anyway he decided to ignore all that and expressed

his willingness to Murugan and Kalyani—Gorojini's parents.

Two days prior to the wedding the post brought to Gorojini's parents a communication from their nephew Seshagiri a soldier returning from Dehra Dun for a long vacation. Murugan and Kalyani instead of rejoicing over this in effect, found themselves between the ‘devil and the deep sea.’ There was a special reason for this. Murugan's dear nephew Seshagiri had been once spoken of as the probable husband of their daughter. As if to remind them of this obligation Seshagiri had been making regular money orders to Murugan out of his hard earned emoluments. But Gorojini's wedding was now to be ceremonised with Suryaraman!

All night Murugan's mind was on the stretch with anxiety as to how he could answer to his nephew for he always had a very soft corner for Seshagiri. He liked this sister's son of his notwithstanding his poor education. Seshagiri had spent his adolescence under the care of Murugan as the latter's sister was dead by then. When Gorojini was born to Kalyani perhaps the happiest soul in that family was none other than the young Seshagiri. When she cried he would carry her over his tiny shoulders and make her grin heartily. He would manipulate his glib tongue and produce sounds resembling the mewing of cats, barking of dogs, the

braying of donkeys and the crowing of cocks. Visibly moved by this firm attachment of young Seshagiri towards his daughter Murugan had cherished a dream of elevating him to the status of his son-in-law in due course. Even Kalyani used to okay the scheme. "You have broached for me the very subject I have come to speak," she used to preface the talk.

YEARS later when twisted bristles sprouted out under Seshagiri's nose he had to leave his uncle in search of a living for though he had a good heart and common sense he was devoid of an academic brain to pass examinations and secure white collar jobs. He neither liked to do despicable work in the town. Considering his robust health and symmetrical limbs he was absorbed by the military and sent to Dehra Dun for duty. He was now coming home after a wide span of five years to catch a glimpse of his dear uncle, aunt and above all the idol of his heart—Gorojini.

The significance of Seshagiri's return was forgotten in the tempo of hectic preparations which were being made for the wedding. The house was white-washed and varnished; festoons and buntings were suspended at the doorways; the nuptial chamber was got ready. Murugan availed a loan against the mortgage of a piece of his landed property and bought textiles, ornaments as well as provisions for the feast. Band and petromax lamps were arrang-

ed for. Invitations were flung to the relatives, neighbours and friends including the staff of the Standard Middle School. The Revenue Divisional Officer was to be the chief attraction among the guests. As Suryaraman did not belong to that locality it was agreed that the Standard Middle School be temporarily converted into a hostel to house the bride-groom's party. On the appointed hour the bride-groom and his people were to start in procession from the School, cover the entire distance of three miles by foot and reach the grand pandal raised in Murugan's house.

Seshagiri alighted at the gate from a tonga and stared astonishingly at the festive look and pandemonium in the house completely unaware of the cause of all that. He hastily hurled the suit case and hold-all into the compound and rushed inside. Murugan stood at the threshold forcing a perplexed smile struggling to disguise the feeling of guilt. It was only with great effort he could explain the whole affair to Seshagiri. But no sooner Seshagiri was administered with that shocking dose of information than a crawling sensation ran all over his body. He could not hold back the sob that choked him, a brave soldier though he was.

"BUT is it her own wish?" he asked, his face puckered into an expression of dismay. None could, however, answer him to his entire satisfaction.

The Sun rose and set once and when he rose again brilliantly on the Eastern horizon he brought with him the 'subha muhurtham' of Gorojini's marriage. Hectic movements of women clad in delightful costumes, the booming of pipes and drums, the jingle of cymbals and the profuse smoke emanating from the altar characterised the opening of the day. The disgruntled Seshagiri was perhaps the only unhappy soul in that house.

Just then a messenger came running into the pandal and bawled out "The bride-groom Suryaraman is missing from the school since last night" !!

This explosive piece of information had its desired effect on the listeners. A terrific confusion prevailed in the pandal. Besides the parents and relatives of Gorojini, the guests including the R. D. O were stunned. Kalyani ran inside the nuptial chamber to perceive the condition of her daughter where the news had already reached. She had to behold the scene of her daughter collapsing flat on floor like a piece of timber.

"This is definitely indicative of some deception," opined somebody. There was a consensus of opinion about that in the gathering. "The Headmaster as he belongs to a superior caste wanted to evade this marriage," was another's view.

"If I were in your position, Mr. Murugan, I would certainly not delay but choose someone from the pandal and celebrate the wedding," remarked the elderly R. D. O. An idea flashed through Murugan's brain. He moved to the interior to consult with Kalyani.

"No, no; how can it be done? Gorojini is in unshakable love with the Headmaster," Kalyani tried to evade the idea.

"But see how he has escaped. Seshagiri is a fine boy. You also know how sorry he was to hear about the wedding. We cannot stand against the will of God," she elucidated. Some agreement was thus reached. The bride was administered with first aid and brought to her senses. She was led to the altar and the guests deposited themselves in their proper seats. Seshagiri put on the best set of dress with him and sat squarely beside Gorojini, his mind full of gratitude for heaven.

THE wedding over, Seshagiri entered the nuptial chamber with his bride and bolted the door tightly. The Sun was ready to dive into the Arabian sea. Some of the guests who had not yet dispersed were chewing paan and gossiping. Suddenly their attention was drawn to a number of petromax lamps moving in an array towards them. The procession straightaway entered the pandal. Suryaraman was in the middle wearing the robes of a bridegroom. There

was wonder in everybody's eyes.

"I am sorry for being a bit late. I had to see my mother who had suddenly taken ill and sent me a wire to go over home and see her," said Suryaraman ignorant of all that had transpired there some hours back. No one seemed to listen to him and there were curves of ridicule on everybody's lips. Kalyani was obviously moved by the Headmaster's account and thought that her daughter would be unhappy throughout her life if she was not married to Suryaraman. "I will request Seshagiri and see that he gives way for the Headmaster," she said as if to herself.

"Are you a fool? Is marriage

a mere phrase where you can change characters frequently? Seshagiri and Gorojini have been bound by the sacred chord of matrimony and it is criminal to try to disunite them," exhorted wise Murugan. But Kalyani was so persistent. Knocking at the nuptial chamber she called "Gorojini...Gorojini." There was no reply. "Gorojini...Gorojini" she repeated. A feeble female voice emerged from within the nuptial chamber... "men should be honest and keep up their promises. Mother, tell the Headmaster I would send the resignation tomorrow." It was evident she was in a state of unknown ecstasy as the words were uttered as if in a reverie. Marriages are made in heaven. ††

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Short Story

By B. R. Nanavati

It was a love affair that ended in a storm. For the sake of the children she had a plan ready...

After The Storm

FOR years Chaya was worrying herself into a nervous, sleepless state. She pleaded earnestly with Suresh and went on bended knees before him every night. But he would just nod and grunt in answer to all her arguments and silence her with his kisses and gather her in his arms.

His silence was intriguing her. Sometimes his indifferent and evasive attitude was so unbearable that she worked herself into a fury. A volcano in eruption would be less violent, comparatively speaking. She would hit him with words and missiles and once she tore at him and scratched his face with her nails. He just vanished from home and came back after three days when he was satisfied that all was quiet on the home

front and she was pining for him.

His boy Anand and his daughter Rita clutched him at the knee and cried in sheer happiness on his return. And Chaya gave him more than a welcome smile and burst into tears at the same time. He would send the children out to play and then make the most conciliatory approach to her. He would wipe her tears with his kerchief and speak so soothingly that she would begin to smile and apologize to him for her loss of temper and worse. He would then take her out to the pictures, leaving the children in the care of a neighbouring old lady.

The trouble, however, restarted with greater vehemence and passion after a few weeks

of intense happiness. The reason was not far to seek though the couple managed to keep their secret in the new town where they had set up home. Chaya had been married to a different man, Balram. For two years they were living happily until a disastrous turn of events made her most miserable. Her husband's younger brother, Malik, had lost his job owing to retrenchment. He tried in vain to get another job and gladly returned home when Suresh offered asylum. Their mother who had been with Malik also came back to her elder son's house.

THE easy and luxurious life, led by Chaya, when her second son was struggling for the bare necessities of life irritated the mother-in-law and she began to harass the young woman. She called her all sorts of names; she told her friends how the girl she had picked up from the gutter was now giving herself airs and was so haughty and aloof.

Day by day the old woman tightened her control, commanded Balram to hand over his earnings to herself, restricted the movements of her daughter-in-law and at the expense of both was sumptuously feeding and pampering Malik. She forbade Balram to talk and laugh with his wife in daytime as the neighbours were making acid comments upon her frivolous nature. She did not stop

there. She denied her new sarees and blouses with the result that she presented a frowzy appearance.

In fact Chaya hated herself and cursed the day she was born. It was at this time that she met Suresh, who was her playmate in her childhood days. He was a very handsome young man but the only physical defect was a misshapen ear on the left which he adroitly covered with long hair on that side and a cocked hat.

He met her outside the temple one dark evening when her husband, mother-in-law and brother-in-law had been on a pilgrimage to Hardwar. She entertained him in her house, telling her neighbours that he was her aunt's son come to visit her. They trusted her word and left them to themselves.

DURING the night she poured forth all her woes to him and sobbed. He lent a patient ear but tried to keep aloof from this marital tangle. He counselled her to be patient. He was working in the Port Trust, drawing a decent salary and promised to look her up now and then. But she only laughed hysterically and shook her head. He then gave her a purse full of notes, asking her to keep it for some emergency and run up to him if she found life in her husband's home unendurable.

But she would not let him in peace. She clung to him that night for comfort and gave herself to him. It is needless to add that she hypnotised him. The next evening she told her neighbours that she was going with her cousin to his village to see her aunt who was lingering between life and death and that she would be back before next Sunday. The tears in her eyes and the young man's crazy and bewildered look convinced the neighbours that an aunt was dying and it would be churlish to stand between the patient and her beloved niece.

HAVING fooled them all, the erring couple went to the city where he was employed. He hid her in a friend's house for a month and then, after satisfying himself that the coast was clear and that the husband had not cared to lodge any complaint with the police, set up home.

They lived in sin though they were in the seventh heaven of happiness for a while. He became panicky when she presented him first with a boy and then with a girl. She wrote to her parents who did not choose to reply. She went to her sister's house in the next town but she slammed the door on her.

As for Suresh, his friends—the respectable among them—gradually kept away and were evasive and elusive whenever he saw them. His own parents

scenting out his sinful secret were mysteriously silent and made it clear in their letters that they would not be visiting him but would be glad to receive him in their village home where they had many matters to settle and discuss. Thus he was repulsed and ostracized at every turn. Everyone he knew seemed to be talking behind his back, and he was shocked and disgusted.

At home, however, he had the love and devotion of the woman who preferred him to her husband and the children who clung to him in their innocent warmth and affection. But he shuddered at the bleak and black future that awaited the little ones. If people knew that they were the fruits of an illicit affair who would care for them? They would be the outcasts of society. But he must see to it that they were well educated and free from all cares.

Unable to bear the cruelty of all the scandal and back-biting, he had himself transferred to another coastal town. And here she began to urge upon him the need to enter into a form of marriage before the registrar and legalise their union. He knew that she did not know what she was talking about. Her husband was still alive and the course she suggested would land him in trouble and even in jail if her husband chose to take action.

After a stormy scene one night he hit back at her with all his verbal fury. His words lashed at her like angry waves dashing against the shore. He raged and swore, holding his hands as if he would strangle her and make an end of the whole business.

AT one stage in the quarrel he grabbed her by the shoulders and shook her until her teeth rattled in her mouth and her eyes popped out. He recalled the story of their romance. Who was it that took the initiative? He had not the slightest idea of making love to a married woman. He had only brotherly sympathy and feeling for her and his idea was to speak to her husband and persuade him to set up a separate home and make her happy. But she had spoiled it all and ruined herself by tempting him into sin.

What was the result of it all? He thundered as he turned round and lifted up her tear-stained face. "Speak to me frankly or shall I tell you the blunt truth?" In answer she sobbed and the tears poured down her cheeks like a fountain. But he wanted to be cruel and sting her with his words.

"You see, your sister and your parents are avoiding you. The same is the case with me. My friends beat a hasty retreat on seeing me and if by chance we stumble upon each other they make excuses and go away.

My parents have made it clear that I can't live with them unless I marry the girl of their choice.

"And so long as your husband is alive there is no question of marrying you and giving the sanction of legitimacy to the children. We are living under a curse and there is no getting away from it. That is the plain truth and don't you talk to me about marriage."

He then walked out of the house, slamming the door.

She suddenly subsided into silence and seemed dazed. When he returned in the morning he found some neighbours crowded in front of his house, trying to comfort his weeping children. When they gently broke the news that his "wife" was found dead he broke down and wept full of remorse for all his harsh words.

WAITING FOR WHAT?

There was a large queue outside a shop. Two women were passing and decided to join in. After a long time they reached the counter. "What were we queuing for?" they asked the shopkeeper. "You're not queuing up for anything," replied the shopkeeper. "All these people were just waiting to tell me what they thought of me for never having anything they want in stock!"

Short Story

By N. Krishna

Once a husband begins to suspect his wife, his hatred bubbles up like an unchecked fountain. It was so in the case of Jaisingh...

ARTIST AND THE ACTRESS

J AISINGH was looking through the huge pile of letters from his wife's fans.

Nalini's popularity was growing immeasurably now. Her innumerable male admirers were raving about her beauty and glamour. For instance, one fellow wrote every third day, praising her for having danced in transparent garb and asking her for more such scenes.

There was yet another fellow who bombarded her with his epistles, threatening to commit suicide before her bungalow if she did not grant him a personal interview. He went on to say that he would go mad and that he couldn't get her picture off his mind.

Nalini frowned whenever she read his letters. She was afraid her husband would think of her

in a wrong light after reading all this muck and nonsense. She even talked to him about it and proposed not to touch her mail with a pair of tongs thereafter. But he laughed it off with an affectionate kiss. She was in the profession rightly or wrongly and she must play her part to perfection. She must not displease her fans, he insisted, and must always keep smiling. He pressed her to send her distracted admirer a photo of hers and mollify him. She promised him—Bhagwan was his name or so he styled himself—an interview in the very near future.

Not that Jaisingh was very happy and contented. He often wondered whether he was right in his choice—why he had discarded Bala, the sweetheart of his town and preferred to run after an actress whose past was a

closed book to him. He had done a certain piece of acting that her fan Bhagwan was now threatening to do. He was always trailing her in those days and stood before her apartment for hours. She lived in a rented top flat then.

She often noticed him, treated him to one of her inimitable smiles but soon disappeared from his ken. He was not sure whether she was mocking at him or was encouraging. He boldly bribed her watchman and quietly slipped into her room. She felt outraged as she looked up at him—she had been reading a magazine. Her eyes blazed like those of a tigress rudely disturbed by a hunter in her lair. She threw the journal at his face and asked him to clear out. She threatened to run to the phone in the next room but he barred her way.

He produced a revolver and told her he would be a sacrificial offering at her altar. For one moment she stared at his earnest face and was convinced of his utter devotion.

SHE begged of him to surrender his weapon on promise of sympathetic consideration. He left her room that night with a new hope in his broken heart. He visited her every day for three months and the upshot was they were secretly married.

That was why Bhagwan's letter had a special significance

of its own. She was afraid that it would stir his memories and make him miserable and suspicious. Lately she had been observing he was rather tense and irritable. He was upset over trifles and bawled at the servants. Formerly he used to chide her whenever she spoke harshly to the menials. He had been uniformly kind and courteous to one and all and was suave and polished in his speech and manners. It would always be a pleasure to listen to his chiselled and well-chosen words which flowed with a stream of honey.

WHAT had happened now?

Knowing his mind like the palm of her hand, she guessed that he was suspicious, though he never made a reference to her. After a time she gradually forgot about it. She attributed his change of mood and restlessness to some imbalance of mind and dismissed all further thoughts about it.

The truth was that Jaisingh was really suspicious and jealous. From the mail bag every day before her husband looked through it, she would pick up a certain letter and eagerly open it. And she would instantly hide it inside her blouse if she heard his footsteps. He was intensely curious, at the same time, what could be the secret that she could be hiding from him? Once at home—in the bedroom—they had a heart-to-heart talk and their happiness

had been boundless because they had no secrets from each other. But he was too clever for her and adroitly purloined one of her letters. The writer was J. Doss, an artist, who wrote unfailingly to her everyday and he referred to her letters which he said he could treasure always for the warmth of her regard and depth of her feeling. Soon, he said, his plans for her would bear fruit and he was confident of making her supremely happy.

JAISINGH now knew that his idol had feet of clay. The scales fell from his eyes. He was positive that his wife had fallen violently in love with this artist. From his experience he knew that artists mostly were Bohemians, given to gaiety and irregular ways. They were said to be more susceptible to feminine charms than men in their walks of life.

One letter was enough and it contained the fellow's address. He did not touch the other letters but his hatred of his wife gathered momentum every day until he decided to approach the artist and confront him with his own letter. Then he would confront his wife with her treachery and faithlessness. The final result he knew. He would kill her rather than let her scot-free with her amours.

He took the train to the little river-side town sixty miles off and walked towards a modest-looking but fine house. He

gave two little knocks at the door. For a few minutes there was no reply but he heard someone coughing. An old man with a grey moustache and a stoop in the shoulders opened the door. "Step in, please," he said. "Whom do you wish to see?" He was very polite and courteous.

"May I see Mr. J. Doss, the artist? I am coming from film star Nalini Bai," said Jaisingh with an air of importance.

The old man extended his hand to the visitor. "I am so glad to see you. Well, I am Doss, the artist. The portrait, you know, is not yet complete. I am giving the finishing touches. It was so kind of that great star to think of me and send you. Come in." He looked once again at the visitor under the light and exclaimed. "My heavens!" he exclaimed. "So the subject of my picture has come here. I was wondering how your lips would curve in a smile. You see that lady is so much in love with you that she wanted to surprise you with the portrait on your birthday. She is such a simple-minded woman that she can't contain herself and has already told you about it. My God bless her."

To think that Nalini could have fallen in love with this old man! How absurd! It was a shame-faced Jaisingh who returned home full of a new love for his wife. †

For The Sake Of The Son

*He was an old man but had a sporting spirit.
It did not fail him even when his second wife
deserted him...*

WITH his right leg encased in plaster, Bajaj was fretting on his bed in the special ward. The doctor had given him a sedative and that sent him into a long spell of refreshing sleep. But Bajaj had always a worrying tendency. His family physician had specially warned him not to let trifles upset him as his heart was proving more troublesome than before. The creeping years would certainly not improve matters.

Bajaj had promised his doctor to abide by his advice and transfer the main burden of his business to the shoulders of his nephew, Sadhuram. He was a wholesale dealer in watches and clocks, and had three branches

in three main cities. During the war time he had amassed a huge fortune. He had never dreamt that he would be making such a pile of money. He owned a fine bungalow, two cars and had half a dozen servants to attend on him.

His wife, Leela, was far younger than him. He was fifty-one and she was thirty-two. She was very attractive and was doing social work. As secretary of the women's club she approached him for donations and invited him to preside over important functions. He was head over heels in love with her. He had lost his first wife in his twenties. She had died shortly after delivering a male child.

The baby also followed its mother despite the best attempts of the doctors to save its life. From that day Bajaj concentrated on his business and forgot the tragedy of his early life.

WHEN he married for the second time, Bajaj was quite strong and energetic. Many thought that he must be only forty. He had his teeth intact and his hair was black. There was not even the suggestion of grey hair. He took long walks in the morning and played tennis for two or three hours in the evening.

Leela, too, was very fond of him and tried to make him happy. Within two years she became the mother of a boy and Bajaj was naturally in raptures. He engaged a nurse to take care of the baby so that he could be free to go about after a few months. But she began to neglect her child and took to outdoor activities with greater zest and interest than before her marriage.

With her husband's grudging consent, she engaged Ranjit, a young man, to teach her tennis. He was an expert no doubt and initiated her into the subtleties of the game. What Bajaj did not know was that the young man also taught her the subtleties of love. She became so infatuated with him that she went out with him to dramas, pictures and other entertainments.

Tongues were wagging as a

result. The friends of Bajaj were shocked at this outrage and one or two of them even talked of dropping a broad hint to Bajaj about the scandal but they were silenced by the wiser among them.

Somehow, as the months passed, an anonymous letter opened the eyes of Bajaj to his wife's undue interest in the young man. Quietly and with dignity he spoke to his wife about the duties awaiting her at home and begged of her to pay less attention to the young man and more to their little boy, Dev. She pretended not to hear him, looked him all over with withering scorn and then shut herself up in her room. She saw less and less of her husband and was content to instruct her nurse to take better care of her son, Dev. And, then, to the dismay of her husband and astonishment of the neighbourhood she disappeared with her lover.

WHEN she returned home late one night after a week Bajaj was stern in tone and commanded her to go to the servants' room. He met her alone there and asked her to account for her absence without his permission. When she kept silent and hung her head down, he wanted to know whether he could take her silence as a sign of remorse and repentance. When she didn't reply he said emphatically that his home was no place for her and that she must get out at

once. He blamed himself for his stupidity in marrying again at such an age. But it was past the stage of regrets because he had lost face.

He almost pushed her out of the room but she came back and spoke plainly for the first time. "It is true that I am a ruined woman and you have denied me your protection. But give me back my Dev. He must be in my custody. The law may be on your side but you pretend to be a man with a sense of justice and fairplay. You can't take a son apart from his mother however bad she is. Don't take the curse of a mother with you."

He staggered under the sharpness of this blow. To part with his beloved little son! Would life be the same again after such a separation? He slumped into a chair and thought for a few minutes. Then he placed a proposition before her: Would she agree to take Rs. 300 every month and keep aloof from both her husband and son? If she did not like the monthly allowance she was welcome to take Rs. 50,000 in final settlement on promise of leaving Dev in his care. With tears in her eyes she chose the latter alternative.

He sent her to an hotel and within three days he paid her off on obtaining a signed statement from her, agreeing to release him from all obligations as her husband. And she went

off with Ranjit to some unknown destination. That was the last Bajaj saw of her.

The shock of this incident made him absent-minded and he was often listless and depressed. It was in such a mood that he fell one day from the staircase and broke his leg while coming down a flight of stairs. He worried not about his business because his nephew was quite an honest, upright man and would manage it more efficiently than himself.

It was around his son that his thoughts centred. He was not even five and it was a problem how to bring him up. When he was fifteen he would be past seventy. Could he live until he was launched on his career and become financially independent?

But he dismissed all thoughts about the distant future. The immediate present was more important. News had been brought to him that Jamuna whom he had engaged to look after his son was shortly leaving for Allahabad where she was to be married. He at once sent her word that he wished to see her.

Bajaj was awaiting her arrival. He had sent his car to fetch her. He would earnestly plead with her to postpone the wedding until he was well and found another woman to take care of

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Vegetable that controls diabetes

(CONTRIBUTED)

FIFTY years ago it used to be said that anyone suffering from diabetes was dubbed as an *alpayus*—a man with the shortest span of life. And his relations out of pity for the dying man would ply him with all sorts of sweet preparations for it was considered inhuman to deny a dying man his last wish. Indigenous physicians had a remedy for it but their brew or concoction was so bitter to the taste and their regulation of diet was so strict that very few patients would go to them. Even if they sought for their treatment, it was at a very late stage when the ailment had become too chronic, and nothing effective could be done to give any relief.

The word "diabetes"

(mellitus) has its origin in a Greek word "fountain." It implies that the person suffering from diabetes discharges a large amount of urine, which contains sugar. There are some patients who cannot undertake a bus journey for more than half an hour because they have to seek for a convenience every fifteen or twenty minutes. While seeing a film they may prefer seats very near the exit so that they can pop out for a visit to the closet. So great is the urge that they become urine-conscious most of the time.

Insulin has changed all that and control of this urge to pass urine frequently is largely effective. It counteracts the sugar in the system. But the discovery of insulin does not

mean that a cure for diabetes has been found. In spite of all the latest advances in medical science there is still *no cure* for diabetes.

Insulin plays a part as an effective substitute for the pancreas. Doctors are still trying to produce an insulin "that is equivalent to the body insulin or that which is manufactured by the pancreas and released as it is needed."

All that insulin can guarantee is that one can live well with diabetes, provided he is careful in his diet and habits. If he is strong-willed and succeeds in eliminating starch and sugar from his food and drink, he is certain to live a more normal life and can even gradually reduce the intake of insulin. It is true that many patients become needle-phobias and turn indifferent with disastrous results. If only they control their diet and way of living they have not much to fear. An occasional shot of insulin would more than suffice.

A diabetic must tell himself that he is going to find life "sweet" even if there is no sugar or jaggery in his food. He should not imitate the customer at the hotel, who said to the waiter: "Bring me two jilebis, one jamoon and halwa. But, remember, there should be no sugar in my tea. It is the doctor's order!"

In some communities they use sugar in all dishes, and chutneys

too contain a large percentage. The diabetic must avoid it. He must not attend parties or other functions where the food served is apt to be sweet and tempting but is certain to aggravate his ailment. The use of saccharin for drinks is recommended. If he feels like taking something sweet, he can ask his lady to prepare cakes and puddings with powdered saccharin in the place of sugar.

Broken wheat in preference to rice is more wholesome. Potatoes and roots which have more starch and less food value must be eschewed. He must be content with a small quantity of diluted milk. Condensed milk is taboo for him. If he has a taste for buttermilk he can take three or four glasses. They can help in quenching his thirst which is more pronounced in a diabetic patient than anybody else. Once or twice a week he can go in for cakes made of boiled rice and gram. But excessive quantity is forbidden.

Greens like spinach, tomato and lime will do him good but beans are best avoided. Coming down to fruits, he is apt to cheat himself if he takes plantain fruit, grape or mango. They contain sugar and his complaint will become acute if he takes them. Dried fruit which is soaked in sugar will prove to be his worst enemy even if he is careful about his food

but succumbs to the temptation here. Not for him are oranges but he can take citrus once or twice a week for it relieves constipation.

Recently an eminent physician has unearthed a fine Ayurvedic remedy for arresting diabetes and keeping it under perfect control without frequent resort to insulin. The vegetable, known as "bitter gourd" in English must be taken by the diabetic. Three or four inches long (on average) the bitter gourd is really bitter to the taste and reduces the sugar content in the blood if taken every day. Cut it into slices (two for a dish) boil them with a pinch of salt, add some condiments for flavour and eat them.

More effective is the following recipe. Take five or six bitter gourds, slice them off, remove the seeds inside, pound them to paste, put the paste on a clean white cloth and squeeze the juice out of it. Two teaspoons of this juice taken first thing on getting up in the morning will do immense good. In some parts of India where bitter gourd is growing in plenty, several diabetics are taking the juice daily and are registering remarkable improvement. This vegetable is easy to procure. Bitter it may be to taste but it makes the diabetic's life sweeter by making him really healthy.

For The Sake Of The Son

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her son. That meant he would be in hospital for another two months. He would certainly offer her a tidy sum as compensation. She was a sensible woman and she was much attached to the boy.

When she came in he invited her to sit next to him. Being too poor she kept standing. He asked her whether she could not reconsider her plan and stay on until he was discharged from the hospital.

Then, overcoming her nervousness she told him that her parents intended to marry her off to a very old man well past sixty. She was frank. She admitted that she was nearly thirty-five. It was poverty that had led her into this sad plight. She asked him half smiling, half weeping whether he would himself advise her under such circumstances to have the wedding postponed.

He smiled and pressed her to sit close by. "If it is a question of marrying some old man why not marry me? I am not so old as that man who is the choice of your parents. You love Dev as your own son and is that not sufficient recommendation? Well, think over it."

As soon as he came out of the hospital they were married.

THE WANDERING CLOUD

I TRAVEL over mountain and valley, plain and desert.

When I was born I was light and fluffy as a feather. They say I have become dark because I wander about always. But I am unable to verify this fact. I don't have any mirror to gaze at my reflection. I am told that a lake or a river, when it is calm will serve the purpose of a good looking-glass but there is a difficulty. I cannot go down close to the earth. From the height from which I stand at ease, it is not possible to look into the deep waters below. The glare from the sun is too strong. It does not, however, mean that I am short-sighted. I can clearly see how life on the earth goes on. Some people shout in joy or anger. Some weep or fight, and some others gaze at the stars, the moon and the clouds like me and seem to write all sorts of things. It is funny to watch the flow of life on the earth blow.

I, too, am subject to the moods which overcome men and women. When the sun is too hot I become restless and have to keep running from that region. On one occasion, however, I was very much annoyed. Immediately after a heavy spell of rain, the sun began to blaze very fiercely. Of course, people below were

dying for an hour of sunshine. I wanted to assert my right to remain where I was. So, small as I was I stood between the sun and the people and blotted out the former. When I heard many people curse me I was even more obstinate and would not budge an inch. After nearly an hour, the heat became unbearable and I thought it wise to give way though I made a show of relenting towards the mortals.

It will surprise many on the earth to know that we, too, indulge in what are called dog-fights. Like the highly cultured and noble-minded people in the society, the light clouds are graceful and dignified and are always above the petty quarrels that break out among clouds like myself. When there is some high wind or storm we know we will be tossed and jostled. We run for safety over sea and land, high hill and deep valley. There is at times a stampede also and we quarrel among ourselves. When we get very angry we become very dark with passion. Then we fight, clash with one another and break our teeth. As a result, you see vivid flashes of lightning and continuous peals of thunder. The wind comes

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sport for beauty

THE best aids for health and beauty have always been outdoor sports for their fill of fresh air, relaxation and sunshine. So pick your sport for beauty's sake.

Swimming, for instance, is an all round normalizer. If you are the too-slim type, it will round you out. If you are overweight it will streamline your curves. It's wonderful for developing shoulders and bust line. If diving is your forte, you probably already have perfect poise.

When you try on your new bathing suit and it reveals too many bulges for beauty, try dieting for a month. It won't hurt you, but you will feel better and your suit will certainly fit more sleekly.

For a nice smooth back to gleam through the water as you swing into your best crawl stroke try massaging and cleaning with a long-handed back brush and plenty of pure soap. Rub the soap well into your skin while showering. Massage well with your brush and rinse thoroughly with water, the colder the better, to whip up tardy circulation.

Then there is tennis. If you play well you're probably in top physical form already.

Footwork is important in this game and is a real exercise. Dancing and badminton will improve your footwork. If you strive for tournament fame get plenty of sleep and maintain a proper diet. Plain food and not too many soft drinks.

Tennis enthusiasts should take care of their feet. A good chiropodist will clear away calluses and other foot problems but you can dispel tiredness by treating them yourself at home to hot and then cold water-dousings. Have the water as hot as you can bear it and as cold as possible, alternatively. Exercise your feet whenever you have a few moments to spare and you'll dance and play tennis better.

For waist whittling you can't beat a good game of golf. When you take those match winning swings you'll limber up your logged-muscles. Wear special golf gloves if your hands are tender, and you need to avoid blisters.

Walking and hiking are perhaps man's oldest outdoor exercise. They are sound year-round pursuits, wonderful basic exercise, providing opportunity for much deep breathing, which is one of the cheapest beauty builders available to us, and yet over-looked by so many. There is an old yogic saying, "To breathe properly is to live properly." Twenty or thirty deep breaths are a fine morning and evening exercise. But remember also to breathe deeply as you walk, whether you are out for a stroll for fun, or walking to the bus on your way to work or shopping. Pure fresh air is yours for the taking; drink it in deeply and see how much better you'll feel. Deep breathing helps to steady edgy nerves also.

Lawn bowling is an ideal spot for the more mature figure. It provides bending and general pepper-upper exercises.

There's nothing like bicycling to develop shapely legs. To pedal up a steep hill slowly, if you can do it, will develop too thin limbs. If you pedal quickly it is a reducing exercise. Massaging oil into your legs will also add extra curves. Rub a tanolin cream on your legs if they are chapped. Superfluous hair can be removed with a soaped pumice stone.

You can slenderise your ankles and strengthen your arches by walking around on tiptoe just before going to bed. It is profitable to make it a nightly exercise.

Archery, an ancient sport, but still popular, develops poise and physical perfection. Rowing and canoeing also are pleasant pastimes, fun to do and definitely beauty building, if you don't overdo them.

Even fishing and angling have their beauty recommendations. The patience you demonstrate while waiting for that bite will give you serenity. Your excitement when you land your fish will stimulate and tone your system.

If you enjoy your sports after office hours you can chase away that tired feeling at the close of a working day by brushing your hair. It's surprisingly refreshing and invigorating to a sluggish circulation.—SANDRA *

The Story Of A Cloud

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in pursuit to catch hold of the naughty ones, punish them suitably and set our house in order. Those who are massed together are scattered. Many, unable to bear his severity, dissolve into tears. They are so wounded to the quick that they do not wish to live and disappear altogether. That explains why there are heavy rains on the earth and unmanageable floods.

And, last but not least, what do you think of me? I know I am going to quarrel like all other clouds and ultimately go their way.

—GOPALKRISHNA

New Mystery Serial—3

SAFE DEPOSIT

By LINDSAY HAMILTON

The story so far :

Stephen Agnew, known as Stag of the *Daily Comet*, is returning to his flat at 2 o'clock in the morning, when he sees a young man flying headlong down the steps of a house. Two men follow him, but upon seeing Stag scramble back and close the door.

Stag recognises the young man as Michael Smith, his travelling companion on a recent journey from Marseilles. Michael has been accompanied by his beautiful sister Vicky. On reaching London the couple had vanished.

Stag later obeys the impulse to re-visit the mysterious house. He finds it empty, with signs of a recent and hurried exit. The discovery of an empty veronal phial and the crumpled half of a letter, arouses his suspicions. The gist of the

letter seems to suggest that the writer was involved in operations of a criminal nature.

The following morning Stag learns of the sudden death of his uncle, James Agnew. He had been found dead at his writing table, the beginning of a letter in front of him. Appearances suggest that he had taken an overdose of veronal.

Stag makes the astonishing discovery that the half sheet of paper picked up in the mystery house, is the lower portion of his uncle's letter. The two halves, read in conjunction, lead him to believe that his uncle may have been murdered.

Stag determines to get to the bottom of the mystery, and his first job must be to find Michael.

Inquiries at the mystery house lead nowhere. The

tenant has never been seen. He took the flat through an agent in the name of Ogilvey, but seldom used it.

Stag is of the opinion that Ogilvey was none other than his uncle, James Agnew, that he was murdered at the flat by his associates and removed to his own home in the dead of night.

Stag makes search for Michael and his sister, and chance favours him when he comes upon Vicky in Bloomsbury. She is in great trouble. Michael has disappeared. She shows Stag a label on which certain characters are written, and tells him that Michael had torn the label from a key and told her to guard it with her life. Michael himself had kept the key.

Now read on :

"CODE," Stag observed, "and probably impossible to work out the cypher. Far too short. But I get Michael's idea, and he's probably right. The key without the code is useless, and so is the code without the key. He kept the key and gave you the code to keep. Rather brotherly that—to forget the danger he was running you into. It seems that they have got him and the key, but want the code. I wonder what curious mystery that key would unlock. Could you describe it in more detail?"

Vicky did.

"Sounds rather like the Surety Safe Co's. They turn out a very neat little port-hole type of safe chiefly for—" he stopped suddenly. "By Jove, that's an idea! Their special line is supplying Safe Deposit Companies. Hold on a minute, Vicky. Let me think it out...My uncle is treasurer—holds the key—means to abscond perhaps—they do him in—Michael for reasons best known to himself is on the spot—snoops the key, and—by Gad, that would account for a lot. But the receipt. You need more than a key to claim property at a Safe Deposit vault. There is the official receipt. It's all crazy perhaps, but—"

"As crazy as crazy," broke in Vicky in high excitement. "And I don't in the least understand what you are raving about, but it must be right. Michael did speak of a receipt. It was that he was going to get last night."

For a moment neither said a word. By a lucky chance they had hit on the truth, or something very near the truth. It only served to convince Stag the more of Vicky's danger.

"That would be it," he said, soberly. "They have the receipt. Michael had the key. This code on the label means something. What it is we don't know. But they must have it."

He told her then briefly his own personal interest in the affair.

"There were four of them," he said, "controlling some villainy or other. My uncle was on the point of betraying them. They put him away, got him somehow to his own house, and made his death look like accident or suicide. Before he died they forced him to give up the key to their funds, and now they can't use it. Unless they have the key and that scrap of paper they can't touch their money. No wonder they're peeved. Vicky, my dear, your scapegrace brother has landed you in deep waters."

"I don't care about that," she countered stoutly. "We'll fight them. We'll get Michael back. We won't give them the money whatever we do."

Stag grinned broadly. "If you can love a fellow as well as you can fight, Vicky, I'm sorry we weren't married in the cradle."

"Perhaps I should forget and mix the two," she countered swiftly. "Love and fight."

"Splendid," he laughed. "We'd have some great scraps. Black eyes, do you suppose?"

"Me! I should not black your eye," said Vicky, and her gravity was so quaint that Stag

roared with laughter and she joined in.

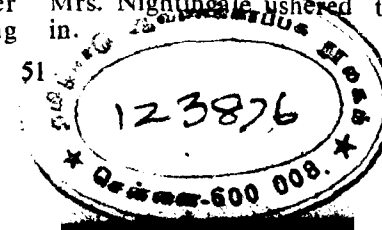
"To-morrow," said Stag, serious again, "must get busy. But first you need a good long rest. The effect of that injection hasn't worn off yet. You'll be quite safe here. I'll be within call if you want me. Now I'm going to send for Mrs. Brown to come and attend to your needs."

Half an hour later Vicky said good-night. She said it very nicely, and unexpectedly. So thought Stag, at least, as he savoured again that sweet frank kiss she gave him before leaving him to his own devices and the doubtful comfort of a settee much too short for his long carcase.

In the morning Stag accompanied Vicky to her boarding-house, hoping to learn news of Michael. He had made up his mind that the only place for Vicky was where he could keep a constant eye on her. He might be exaggerating her danger, but it was better to do that than let her take the smallest risk.

He had not told her yet. But if he had had any doubts of the necessity for such a precaution, that visit to Bloomsbury would have banished them completely.

A very haughty and indignant Mrs. Nightingale ushered them in.



"Oh, so here you are, Miss Smith," she began, almost forgetting her ecclesiastical aura under the stress of some deep and rankling emotion. "You would oblige me greatly, Miss Smith, if you would get your things together at once and go. Yesterday was bad enough, but after your disgraceful conduct last night I really can't allow you to remain here another day. Your account has been made up-to-date."

She flounced away, leaving Stag and Vicky eyeing each other in amazement. Had the good lady gone mad?

"My conduct last night," Vicky looked whimsically at Stag, and laughed. "I don't remember being very disgraceful. And how should she know?"

But the cause of Mrs. Nightingale's disapproval became apparent as soon as Vicky unlocked her bedroom. It was as though a madman had run amok in it. The dressing-table mirror was smashed, a chair lay in one corner as though it had been hurled there, the bedclothes were scattered all over the room.

Stag's eye caught sight of something else. He said nothing, hoping that Vicky would not see, but before he could get between her and the pillow laid with such curious precision in the middle of the otherwise bare

mattress, she gave a low horror-stricken cry.

"Don't be alarmed," said Stag. "Just a grim joke--trying to frighten you, Vicky."

He went to the pillow and casually picked out the knife that was embedded up to the hilt in it, felt the point of it with his finger. Then, tossing aside the pillow, he pounced eagerly on the scrap of paper which lay revealed. It contained a brief message written in pencil in large ungainly characters:

Take warning--your last chance.

"A stunt to scare you stiff, Vicky. It's that label they're after. I wonder how they got in, though. The door was locked just now."

That point, however, was soon settled. A pane of glass was missing from the window. Stag looked out upon a yard below, and was impressed, not so much at the intruder's skill in house-breaking, but at his daring, for it was obvious that he must have used a ladder and worked in a position exposed to view from two sides.

Vicky began suddenly to laugh. "I wonder what Mrs. Nightingale thought I was doing?"

"It settles one point at least. We'll have to get you out of here. You're under my care, Vicky, from now on whether you like it or not."

"I like it," she said, and began at once to collect her belongings and set the room in some sort of order.

Later, in Stag's flat, they discussed whether it was advisable to call in the police or not. Stag was uncomfortably aware of the fact that by doing so he might be involving Michael in criminal proceedings.

Vicky agreed emphatically, and then surprisingly, gave him a piece of information that left him gasping.

"I remember he once said that Mole—one of the men he had known—would have been put in prison years ago if the Law wasn't just as easy to fool as a woman in love. Those were *his* words. He was arguing as usual that people with brains have their own code."

"Mole!" exclaimed Stag. "Was that the name?"

"Yes. It sort of stuck in my mind; I don't know why?"

"Did he ever speak of Carter, or Jessop—or Ogilvey?"

She frowned. "He did men-

tion others. I can't just remember. Those might have been the names. They sound as though I've heard them before. But Mole I do remember. He has a slight cast in the left eye and a habit of twitching his face on one side only when he's annoyed. I've never seen him, but that's what Michael said. He warned me about him the other night. I didn't mention it before because none of the people who bothered me yesterday looked a bit like that one—the Mole," and she grimaced, perhaps at her imaginary picture of him.

It might be flattering to Stag to know that his guesses in the dark had come very near to the truth so far, but they were still no more than names. He could not even begin to look for them.

"There's nothing to do but wait," he told Vicky. "The next move is theirs. They wrecked your room with a purpose, and you can be pretty sure they know where you are."

"I suppose we must," sighed Vicky, "but I do wish I knew where Michael was."

Stag nodded. "I think before long we shall know," he said. "Something warns me to expect visitors."

It spoke well for Vicky's trust in Stag that she bore with him patiently for the rest of that

day. Perhaps there was more in it than that, for she even seemed to share his apparent gift of curing suspense with complete indifference.

He seemed to have forgotten Michael's existence and his earlier warnings to Vicky of her danger. But those who knew Stag best knew that he was a strangely perverse creature and almost impossible to work with. Where another would be keyed up with the need for swift thought and decisive action, Stag apparently went limp and indifferent, just seemed to let things drift. If he did anything at all it was done in the most casual, unimpressive fashion.

That afternoon he took Vicky to the office of "The Comet."

"You'd like to see round," he suggested. "I think you'll find it very interesting. Dacre will do it better than me. I've one or two odd jobs to attend to." He said this as though it was all very much a bore.

It was seven o'clock before they arrived back at Stag's flat. Mrs. Brown put in an appearance at once.

"A gentleman *did* call to see you," she said, "and I told him to call again at 7-30. That was what you said, sir, wasn't it?"

"So I did," agreed Stag, absently, but he shot a quick glance at Vicky to see if she

sensed the significance of this casual announcement. Apparently she did not. "Did he leave his name?"

"Yes, sir. He repeated it specially in case I should forget. 'Mole,' he said. 'Tell him he must meet Mole on a matter vital to his own interests.' Those were his very words."

Stag's eyebrows went up. Vicky was sitting bolt upright. Her eyes shone with suppressed excitement. She could see that Stag was not as surprised as he pretended to be.

"You were expecting this?" she said.

He thanked Mrs. Brown and watched her go before he answered, "Something of the sort. But Mole himself! We are too honoured. You're not frightened, Vicky?"

She laughed. "Not if you aren't."

"I don't think so," he said as though debating the matter quite seriously with himself. "He's a dangerous customer, no doubt. But—putting myself in his place—no, I don't think violence would pay him at this stage. We shall see."

They had not long to wait. Mole arrived punctually at 7-30.

"This is really most interesting," murmured Stag at the

sound of footsteps, heard on the stairs. "The man with the devil. We shall see whether my uncle exaggerated or not."

First impressions at all events were not disappointing. Mole came in with an assurance almost regal. It was not in the least assumed. For a moment he stood with arms folded and massive shoulders hunched forward a little, a saturnine grin on his broad features, and just looked them up and down, the picture of amused malevolence.

Presently he spoke, and though his voice was cultured and of a deep mellow quality, there was an underlying contempt and mockery in it.

"You were wise to see me," he said.

"Oh, I don't know," said Stag casually. "Not much wisdom in it. You wanted to see me, and here you are. I suppose you'd better sit down now you *are* here. How's everybody?—Jessop, and Carter and the rest?"

This was slamming the cards on the table with a vengeance. If Stag's intention was to exasperate this dangerous visitor into precipitate action, he did not succeed. Mole continued to smile, but his eyes had narrowed.

"Thank you, I'll stand," he said. "My stay will be of

the shortest."

There was something almost hypnotic in the man's complete assurance that what he had come for he would get, and in the space of a few minutes.

"Pity you can't stay," said Stag.

"There are other days. A man who knows as much as you know"—there was a significant pause—"would make an interesting companion."

"I was just thinking the same of you, my dear chap," said Stag coolly. "Wondering if you could tell me what had happened to Ogilvey, for instance, and what connexion he had with James Agnew who died recently. The shipping magnate, you know—or perhaps you didn't know him?"

A terrible light flamed for an instant in Mole's eyes. He took a sudden step towards Stag as though he meant to brain him, then checked himself.

"You make it so much easier for me," he said, silkily. "I need not waste words. This young lady has a brother. She also has something belonging to me. Her brother stole it. She will return it to me, and she will still—have a brother."

"Hold on a minute," said Stag, frowning. "Just exactly

what is it you want? What is my young friend here supposed to have belonging to you?"

Whatever game Stag was playing he was certainly not prepared for Mole's answer when it came.

"A key," he said. "I must trouble her to hand it to its rightful owner."

Stag's fist came down with a thump on the table. He shot one quizzical look at Vicky, looked at Mole and began to laugh, not violently, but in much enjoyment.

"That's great," he burst out, turning to Vicky. "Michael has diddled them after all. We couldn't make out what the deuce you were after, Mole, you and your bailiffs and midnight marauders. We thought you had Michael and Michael had the key. We certainly haven't got it. If we had you wouldn't get till Michael was safe."

"Your Michael is safe," said Mole, ominously. "For a little while—just a little while." The grain was gone from his face. He eyed them with cold calculating malevolence. "You may be telling the truth," he said, "or you may be a clever actor."

"Thanks," said Stag, modestly, "I've been told so before. You've drawn a blank, Mr. Mole. Hadn't you better be

going? I can't ask you to stay. Perhaps another time."

Mole seemed to have reached a decision. Stag's deliberately crude jibes affected him not the slightest.

"Another time," he agreed. "Oh, yes, there will be another time, Mr. Stephen Agnew. Your paper will miss you—Good-night!"

He turned deliberately and strode out. The outer door had no sooner closed behind him than Stag switched the light off and on twice.

"Was that a signal?" asked Vicky, breathless with the excitement of a sudden new hope that Stag had expected this and laid his plans accordingly.

"Just a tip to Summers and Green out there," he said, casually. "I thought it might be as well to trail whoever called. We can't do much till we know just who these people are in private life. And it might provide a clue to Michael's whereabouts."

"Oh, Stag!" she exclaimed with fervent admiration, "You think of everything."

"Hm!" he agreed. "Even dinner. I think I hear Mrs. Brown now. One might as well do things in comfort, you know."

(To be continued)

Short Story

By Vidyalankar

Vimal and Shyamla had been great friends but they drifted in different directions. And Fate brought them together again...

A Friendly Hand!

WHEN Vimal met Shyamala in the bazaar she was intensely surprised at her transformation. She was wearing a costly georgette saree, a transparent muslin jacket that emphasised her full bosom, a diamond nose-screw that flashed blue, a gold wrist watch that added to her adornments. On the opposite side of the pavement there were some young ladies staring at her with open mouth. An old woman, evidently her servant maid, was respectfully following her.

Vimal was ashamed of the sags she was wearing. Her saree was soiled and shabby, patched

up here and there and a jacket that was too small for her growing body. But there was no mistaking the prettiness of her figure and neither her clothes nor her starved looks detracted from it.

Vimal tried to get out of her ken. True, they hailed from the same small town. Shyamala had the advantages of school education and even when she was in her early teens she knew the art of luring men friends and winning little presents from them. Her parents doted on her and believed in giving her as much of freedom as she desired and would not

listen to the advice or caution of elder men against unrestricted liberty. Vimal and Shyamala continued to be good friends though they had different temperament and outlook. The one was very shy and modest and refused to raise her voice even in the face of the worst provocation. The other was always excitable and used either to gush with enthusiasm or pour the vials of her wrath. She was given to extremes and her mood changed like the colours of a chameleon.

VIMAL lost sight of Shyamala seven years ago. She moved to the metropolis with her parents and she had no word from her. But she heard rumours to the effect that she lost both her parents during an outbreak of smallpox epidemic. There was however no news about the lonely survivor and she often thought sadly about her possible fate.

Vimal migrated to the city with her mother after a disastrous flood had devastated their village and left them homeless and starving. Vimal's elder brother S u n d a r succeeded in securing a clerical job in a leather goods firm. His pay was small but the family of three managed to carry on in a small hut in the slum quarters. Sundar was immensely liked by the Manager of the firm who promised him good promotion and decent pay very shortly.

As ill-luck would have it, Sundar had a virulent attack of malaria which got a vicious grip on him. He recovered thrice from it but the fever had sapped all his strength and vitality. Bapulal the Manager showed great concern about Sundar's health and paid visits to his humble hut, much to the embarrassment of the patient, his mother and sister. During the three months he was bed-ridden, he liberally allowed him his pay.

It was during his visits that he saw Vimal at close quarters and could not resist her fascination. Though lowly in status, she was definitely and indisputably lovely. She might be lacking in education in the modern sense but she was certainly refined and very sensible in talk and manners. He came frequently in his car to the hut as much to see the patient as to cultivate the friendship of the young woman who had stolen his heart. Vimal too seemed to be fond of him though she was too modest to betray her feelings. Bapulal had, however, decided to marry her and was awaiting a suitable opportunity to ask for her hand. It was natural that he was waiting for the brother to be up and doing.

THE money he allowed for Sundar was hardly enough to meet his medical bill. He had to be injected twice a week and the medicine for the in-

jection was costly. He needed a special diet. The mother and the daughter almost starved themselves to feed the patient. But they hid the truth both from Sundar and Bapulal who was often enquiring whether they needed extra money, and, if so, they should not hesitate to take it from him. The women, however, thought it beneath their dignity to represent their troubles to him.

The result of this self-denial was disastrous. For nearly a week the pots and pans were empty and death from starvation stared them in the face. It was under these circumstances that Vimal met Shyamala and wanted to seek some immediate assistance. She was afraid of speaking to her, seeing how opulent and well dressed she was. But Shyamala had already noticed her and caught hold of her saree by the tail.

They heartily exchanged greetings and seeing how famished she looked, Shyamala dragged her into a hotel and entertained her to a hearty lunch. It was then that Vimal told about her plight in the City, her brother's illness and their continued starvation.

"You will have a hundred rupees this night. Come with me, Vimal, I have a neat little house of my own and I am glad to say I earn enough money and can willingly spare for you. My help is there for the asking and one day, who

knows, you may have a share in the work I do."

It was 9 p. m. when Shyamala reached her house and took Vimal in. She was amazed at the luxurious bedroom of her friend but was dismayed to find two men friends smoking and smirking at them. One of them looked hard at Vimal. "Shyamala, she is a good catch for our job. Train her and she will be a big sensation."

"SHUT up, you fool!" snarled Shyamala. She took Vimal into an inner room when the servant maid came in to whisper to Shyamala. "Run into the backyard. Quick! The police!"

Vimal understood in a flash. She was in a house of ill-fame! But it was too late. Before she could think of running out two policemen grabbed hold of her while another burly constable seized Shyamala bodily and was dragging her towards the van waiting outside.

It must be said to Shyamala's credit that she begged of the police to release Vimal who was poor but respectable. Only when a reference was made to Bapulal who swore that she was his betrothed was she set at liberty.

Bapulal understood the situation at a glance and married Vimal in the following week. †

Meeting The Star!

THE Secretary of the Fine Arts Association told his Joint Secretary with an air of authority :

" We must invite only a film actor of repute to inaugurate our Association since this is a Fine Arts Association. I have already written to Mr. Ranjii Roy of R. R. Studios, Bombay who is expected here shortly for some 'shooting'."

" All right sir, as you please," the Joint Secretary replied.

Daily they awaited a reply from the actor with anxiety and concern. One day they got it in which the actor had complied with their request to do the inauguration. The Secretary was overjoyed and thought he had almost become a personal friend of Mr. Roy's. He printed wall-posters and leaflets and the news of the actor's visit to the college spread like wild fire.

The Secretary picked up an

artist-student of the college, requested him to write in designed letters about Mr. Roy's delivery of the inaugural address. The Artist was delighted at the opportunity presented to him to make an exhibition of his talents and worked on a huge black-board cutting all classes but with permission from the concerned lecturers who were not at all particular of his attendance in the classes. For each letter he took nearly half an hour and at the bottom he wrote in bold letters his name, class in which he was studying, etc. He looked at his artistic work from all angles of vision and prided himself over his supreme artistic ability. While he was contemplating his work the Secretary came there and throwing his hands over his shoulders said admiringly :

" It is simply wonderful, Mr. Artist. I have an idea of requesting Mr. Roy to stand by the side of this board, take a photograph and publish the same in our college magazine."

At this the Artist puffed himself up and his face beamed with a smile.

The Secretary continued, " Who knows ? Mr. Roy might admire your workmanship and take you into his own studios as an Art Director."

The Artist was flattered beyond expression at the words of encouragement the Secretary poured on him and he dragged him to the canteen.

The day of inauguration came. The College stood before the Secretary in stately splendour with tasteful decorations ; with festoons and arches. The Secretary was immaculately dressed in a cream-coloured suit. The photographers (not of the press) taking their flash cameras were busy like bees. A huge crowd had gathered outside and inside the compound of the college. The hall upstairs where the inaugural address was to be delivered was packed to capacity. The scheduled time for the commencement of the function was 6 O'clock. It was 5-30 already and the Secretary was finalising all the arrangements at the entrance of the college to give the distinguished visitor a fitting reception. He formed a committee with his close associates. They were all volunteers with circular badges pinned on their coats which were swinging like pendulums.

One of the committee members, a hefty man with a watch on his wrist which showed the correct time only twice a day, divided the gathering to give attention to the visitor's car. He shouted at the top of his voice :

" Mr. Secretary, on arrival of Mr. Roy's car I will open the door and receive him. Later you introduce him to other volunteers."

He turned to one of the photographers and requested, " Mister, while I shake hands with Mr. Roy you please click one."

He slowly whispered into the Secretary's ears : " What about the tea-party, I say ? For how many have you arranged ?"

" Only for us, that is for me, my joint secretary, and other volunteers," the Secretary replied. " We will first take him to the Physics lecture hall where the party is arranged. From there we will take him to the Main Hall."

" That's O. K.," he said and whistling a cheap cinema tune left the place.

He soon returned and said in a tone of alarm, " What about the photographers ? Should we not invite them also to the party ?"

" No no, there are too many

of them. I've not arranged for them all."

"They may not give copies of photographs then."

"We shall look into the matter later. Now let us form a line. It is nearing six."

The clock struck six. Everyone expected the arrival of the renowned actor with breathless suspense. In a corner of the crowd one was seen murmuring:

"H'm, after all to see a film actor so much of crowd! Has he any horn grown over his head or is he a superhuman being? After all he is a man like us."

"Then, why did you come?" someone questioned him.

"I would never have come, left to myself," he replied in a tone of utter unconcern. "My friend, this man dragged me here."

Evening wore on and in the swiftly passing twilight every car that passed that way attracted the attention of the crowd.

"Oh, he has come. That is Roy's car, maroon coloured Studebaker—President Classic—MSY 77992," one among the crowd shouted.

But that was a Plymouth

Belvedere and it proceeded straight without even lowering its speed near the college and the occupants of the car seemed little inquisitive of knowing what for there was a vast concourse of people.

The crowd became increasingly restless and appeared like the Roman mob immediately after the assassination of Caesar.

At 6-15 p. m. the actor arrived in an old small, fast fading black coloured Austin car taking the gathering by surprise. He was a heavy man with flashing genial eyes and heavy shoulders. He had a thick moustache curling up fiercely over his thin-lipped mouth and pointed chin. He came straight from the studios during a 'break' in 'shooting' and so was with make-up on.

No sooner did they notice him in the car than they ran towards the car breaking the cordon of the volunteers and pounced on it as though an accident resulting in a ghastly spectacle had occurred there. Those who were upstairs could see only the top of the car since the remaining part of it was enveloped by the crowd. Utter confusion prevailed there as in Pandemonium. The 'Cameramen' ran helter-skelter to save their cameras (not even their bodies) from being crushed.

The Secretary shouted at the pitch of his voice:

"Order please, order" like the Speaker in a confused and disordered legislature. But very soon his voice died away in the roaring voice of the multitude of men there.

The actor got down from the car with neither a smiling nor a drab face and by exerting physical effort elbowed his way through the crowd.

Those on the periphery craned their necks like ducks to have a glimpse of him. Some cried, "That is Roy, that is Roy."

Some who could not see him questioned quite inquisitively, "Who? who?"

"That man with the rose paint on his face."

Some students rushed to him extending their autograph books: "Autograph, please."

"Not now, not now," the actor just brushed them aside.

The Secretary knit his brows and clenched his fists at the thorough failure of his ideas to give the visitor a well-organized reception. He murmured incoherent abuses at the crowd. Dejection was writ large on his forehead. With immense effort he struggled through the sea of humanity and confronted the actor who was on his way upstairs.

"Sir, I am the Secretary of the Association who invited you," he said extending his hand for a 'shake-hand' and his face wrinkled with a smile.

With an air of carelessness the actor said, "That's all right. First take me to the lecture hall. I must finish my speech as early as possible and get back to studios."

"How about having a light refreshment, Sir?" the Secretary requested.

"Nothing now. I have no time to lose. I must be back soon."

Mr. Roy stood upon the dais and the deafening noise of the claps of the huge audience continued for sometime and when it was stopped it was like a stormy rain just abated. He began his lecture and talked about the indispensability of 'Films' in this world. Whenever the cine people are invited to give a lecture they will invariably begin like this: "The four necessities of a man are Food, Clothing, Shelter and Entertainment." At least they accept that entertainment is the fourth among those four necessities. He said exactly the same thing and added that the film industry constituted the backbone of national finance and filled the national exchequer with the money the producers paid by way of Incometax, entertainment tax etc., etc., (the

etc, etc have no meaning). He talked of the importance of the industry of films so highly as though the edifice of the administration of our country would topple down without their financial aid and ended by telling that visiting films is one of the fundamental necessities of man.

The audience were bored to death by his stereotyped speech. One of them wanted Mr. Roy to sing a song he sang in the film 'Burayika Badla' which proved a hit. This was followed by the requests of many others.

After some hesitation the actor said that he could not sing without any accompaniment.

At once a B.A. class student who sat near him removed from his pocket a Mouth organ and said he would accompany him on his instrument.

Thus the inaugural address ended with a cine-song which was certainly not as pleasing as the one that was heard in the film.

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HONOUR BOUND

Never promise what you can't perform. For once you promise to do something, you are no longer your own master. You have made a contract, and if you have any self-respect you must fulfil it no matter what the cost.

Truman writes: "When I say I'm going to do something I do it—or bust my insides trying to do it." That sort of promise means something. A promise lightly given is better not given at all.

—JOHN BULL

A Serial Story—3

The Lady Doctor

By E. THEODORE KING

The story so far :

Two Medical College students, Vijay and Vilasini, are very much in love with each other. They meet on the beach. She openly declares her love and urges him to marry her. A bottle of scent that he gives her spreads all the fragrance of a love affair. Back at home Vijay has to look after his sick mother and correct his truant brother Vinod.

Now read on :

MORNING found a hum of noise and a bustle in the house. Vijay had had his bath and was getting ready to go to the hospital. His mother had the breakfast ready and all ate. Vijay corrected his story, folded it, put it in a long envelope and sealed it. He saw Vinod dressing up to go to school.

"Vinod, I heard that you play truant. You are not going to school at all, it seems. Some of your friends told me so. What do you do the whole day?"

"The skunks lied," Vinod barked savagely. "I go to school regularly. Wait till you see my progress report."

"I've been waiting for the progress report for the past three months. Do you really want to read?"

"Of course, I want to."

"You don't seem to show much interest or enthusiasm. By the way, where is the alarm clock?"

"What alarm clock? How would I know?"

"The one that woke us every morning but did not do so today."

"Whom did you sell it to?"

Vasudeva came in, combing his hair, and overheard the talk.

"What happened?" he asked.

"He sold our alarm clock," Vijay said.

"Well, it's our alarm clock and not anybody else's," Vasudeva spoke rather harshly.

Vijay just shrugged his shoulders. He combed his hair and peeped into the kitchen. "Take as much rest as you can, mother. I'll bring some medicine in the evening."

"All right."

He took his cycle out, then rode away.

Ramani brought water from the tap outside and filled the vessels. Then both mother and daughter sat on their haunches and washed the plates and the dishes. Afterwards, the mother sifted the stones from the rice, washed the rice, then put it on the hearth. Ramani cut the vegetables as Chitty came in, waving her hands and cooing and talking odd things.

Vasudeva dressed up in his time-honoured clerk's dress and picked up his umbrella. He went into the kitchen.

"I am going," he said. "Send my lunch soon."

His wife looked up and nodded. He went out and closed the door. Vinod was nowhere around.

When the food and curry were ready, the mother filled the tiffin carrier and waited for Vinod. Ramani bathed and dressed, ready for school. When Vinod came in, the mother told him to take the carrier to his father's office.

"Why don't you send Ramani?" he snarled angrily. "I have to go to school and already I'm late. I won't do your hasty work."

With that, he scuttled away. Ramani took up her satchel of books. She picked up the tiffin carrier also.

"I'll leave it in father's office. It's on my way to school."

The mother nodded and took Chitty up to feed her with milk from a glass. Ramani said, "I'll get along," and was gone. The mother was left alone with the child. She left the baby to play about and picked up her bottle of medicine and drank some, making faces. She opened her box, brought out a big volume of *Bhagavad Gita*, gathered Chitty in her arms and began to croon the *slokas* to ease her troubled heart and mind.

It was a long hall-like ward with thirty beds and patients on all them. It was the surgical

ward and all the cases were either fractures or ulcers or tumours or cancers or inflammations. The nurses went about and the house surgeons gave injections or dressed up the wounds assisted by the nurses. The students stood at different beds scattered, asking questions of the patients, taking down notes, listening eagerly, examining them thoroughly.

Vilasini and Vijay studied the new case posted to them. Vilasini asked the questions. Vijay wrote down in a small, pocket note book.

"What's your trouble?" she asked.

The patient exposed his abdomen and spread his palm about it.

"Pain all over," he said.

"How long did you have this?"

"Nearly three years."

"How is the pain—dull or intense?"

"It's intense only on eating food. A little later, I vomit. I feel eased a bit."

"Do you get any fever?"

"No."

"Do you have pain in a particular region or all over?"

He pointed to his right side. "Usually here," he said.

"How's your appetite?"

"I don't have any appetite."

"Did you have this kind of trouble before?"

"No."

"Anyone in your family?"

"No."

She took his hand and studied the pulse, the finger, the fingernails, pulled his lower lids down and looked at his eyes, examined the tongue, then began to palpate the abdomen. As she examined, she looked at Vijay. She gave a surprised look as she felt a small lump and began to palpate it more carefully. When she straightened up, Vijay smiled at her.

"Well ... ?" he asked.

"PATIENT, male, aged forty-five, not anaemic, not jaundiced, no clubbing of fingers, well-built, complains of pain in the abdominal region, duration three years, acute after food, relieved by vomiting, no appetite, no fever, past history nil particular, family history nil particular.

"Inspection reveals nothing unusual. Palpation reveals a small lump in the right hypochondriac region, about an inch in diameter, rounded, firm, smooth borders not felt, does not move with respiration, slightly tender."

"What's your provisional diagnosis?"

"Carcinoma stomach."

"Oh, God! you don't mean it?"

"I do. Don't take the name of God in vain."

Vijay closed the note book and examined the patient thoroughly. He nodded. Then together, they moved to the marbled table in the centre of the ward on which was a basin with lotion and a towel. They dipped their hands in the lotion and dried their hands with the towel.

"I don't know why they always post me these kind of cases? This will be my third total gastrectomy."

He grinned at her.

"You'll be an expert in it then."

"No, thanks. I want to be a physician, not a surgeon, and mainly a paediatrician."

"Good. You go to England and get a post-graduate degree or fellowship. You'll have authority, experience, a certain dignity and standing. You'll make a good paediatrician then."

They moved from there and came out of the ward and unconsciously moved towards the college and the canteen.

"I'm not going to England or America or anywhere," she said stubbornly. "I'm going to marry and settle down."

"Not a bad idea," Vijay grinned. "Found a man?"

"Oh, yes, a most wonderful man. I'm going to marry him and become a plain housewife. I won't even practise."

"What does he say?"

"He understands me. He loves me, too. He won't mind."

"But you wanted to be a paediatrician."

"Yes. I'll have my children and be a doctor to them only."

Vijay laughed loud "How many?" he asked.

"Considering that I'm a doctor and know something of family planning, I want two sons and two daughters."

"It's quite a family planning."

"What would you do, Vijay, when you're a doctor?"

"Set up practice and clean up the slums. But my father says that I must make money. He says that everything is a racket and this world is full of grab and greed. I guess I'm just idealistic and he's practical."

"You won't marry?"

"I have to. The girl I'm going to marry is very impatient and also very persistent."

Vilasini laughed. They saw Vimala and waved to her. Then all three of them went towards the canteen.

(To be continued)

Short Story

By Saguna Bai Monsingh

SUJATHA'S STORY

[Love beckoned to her even though she has an orphan and poor as a church mouse. Chandru's devotion to her was amazing...]

BIRDS were chirping in the trees and everything seemed full of fresh glad life. But the clouds that fell on our mental horizon that day seemed to obscure even the brightness of summer after hearing the sad story of our beautiful friend Sujatha. We were four, staying in Nagpur for our child welfare training. Janaki and myself belonged to the south and Malati was a Madrasi. Sujatha hailed from Mangalore—a very beautiful lady in her early thirties, we assumed. Her raven black curly hair, well-chiselled features and ivory colour attracted the attention of both sexes. She was of medium height, always dressed in simple, light coloured sari and well-fitting blouse. As for ornaments, she had only a pair of bangles, wrist watch, blue stone earrings and a thin chain.

The sadness in her eyes and pathetic droop of the lovely pink lips were really remarkable. By chance, the four of us met at Madras and proceeded to Nagpur for the same course. We decided to stay at the women's hostel together.

Sujatha was by nature quiet and reticent. She seldom participated in our conversation and never interfered in our affairs.

It was a holiday and we three planned to spend the day in the park. When we invited Sujatha, she had consented readily. We prepared a picnic bag, so to say, with all sorts of eatables available at the moment. Sujatha brought a paper bag full of grapes and four apples. We hired a taxi and reached the park

in good spirit, little dreaming that our hearts would be so sore on our return.

We walked about the park and discussed about our lessons. Sujatha was clever also and her suggestions were very helpful. Malati loved flowers and in spite of the angry stare and black look of the gardener, she plucked four yellow roses and gave us one each. We at once put them in our hair but Sujatha kept smelling it and finally wrapped it carefully in her kerchief.

"Sujatha, why not keep it in your hair? See how the yellow matches your black hair!" said Malati showing her rose against Sujatha's hair.

Shuddering and panting, Sujatha caught Malati's hand excitedly and we could see tears in her eyes. Malati got frightened. Impulsively she stroked Sujatha's head and said pleadingly, "Oh dear Sujatha, I did not know that you hated flowers. I...oh, please," she went on blurting out on seeing Sujatha suddenly weep.

Hiding her face with both hands, Sujatha gave vent to torrents of tears. Her shapely shoulders rose up and down and tears, like pearls, escaped down through her ivory fingers. We three blinked at one another, not knowing what to do. A few passers by stared at us and one or two came forward and

enquired whether they could be of any help; for it was really a sight to see us four in that pathetic predicament. We tried our best to pacify her and stroked her head and shoulders, as though she were a baby. Several minutes passed, and like all things, her sorrow too had an end. Removing her wet hands from the tear-smeared face, she endeavoured to get over her emotion. Very neatly she wiped her face with her sari-end and sat up bravely. Her right toe crushed the grass under her foot and she tried her best to overcome her sorrow.

"I'm so sorry I've behaved so foolishly. In fact, I love flowers but I'm destined to shun them throughout my life," she said slowly.

"Then, are you a..." we started but she interrupted:

"I'm not exactly a widow, but my state is no way better. To tell you the truth, I lost my would-be..." here she had to stop for a while and take control. "Yes, I lost him even before marriage. My life is like an unopened flower, plucked and thrown aside,—a flower without scent.

"Until my nineteenth year, I was the happiest girl. With fairly well-to-do parents and good college education, I had not much to wish this side of the earth. I was an only child. A senior college mate was madly

in love with me. I was his acknowledged girl and life was full of roses for me. Chandru, for that was his name, was very wealthy and his old parents lived in the village. Then there dawned a dark day that started my troubles and sorrows. My parents returning from a wedding met with a train accident and expired among hundreds of others. You might have heard of the Ariyalur train disaster. Hundreds died that day. I was practically left alone and my relations already jealous of my good looks and the prospect of a wealthy and nice husband even refused to offer any consolation.

CHANDRU was my only comfort. With the death of my parents, debtors sprang up like mushrooms and pestered me for debts hitherto unknown to me. I did the only wise thing I knew. I asked Chandru to sell our house and paid off all debts. With the meagre sum left, I stayed in the college hostel. I was given a special scholarship and gradually I found savour in my miserable life once again, watered by the noble love of Chandru. I lovingly declined all help from him.

"Then, after my B. Sc., while he completed his M. Sc., he negotiated with his parents to celebrate his marriage. They, poor souls, selected brides from their families but Chandru refused them all and wrote about me. The orthodox parents

were shocked at the unheard-of act of a boy choosing his own bride. In the end, the parents agreed to tell their final verdict, after seeing the girl. Knowing that I was an orphan, they wanted me to go to their place in the holidays. Reluctantly I agreed."

Here again Sujatha paused and heaved a deep sigh.

WE listened attentively. She resumed. "Well, it was decided that Chandru should go first to his parents and that I should proceed two days later. With apprehension and fear, I sat huddled in my corner and peered at Chandru's station, when at last it came in sight. My heart beat a hundred to a minute. Slowly I got down carrying my suitcase.

"Someone snatched it from my hand and it was Chandru. 'Don't be afraid, Sujata. Your beauty will bewitch my parents in no time. Rest assured' he encouraged me. Still, with beating heart I accompanied him out of the station to a grand glittering horse cart. When we alighted at the gate, two old people, Chandru's parents came up to the steps and peered at me.

"With something like awe and satisfaction, they smiled and patted Chandru's back approvingly. At last, I knew that they had approved of me. You know, I used to be very beautiful those days and I had

quite an agreeable disposition. We went inside the house and I knew Chandru had transformed his old fashioned house lately. His mother and myself had a room to ourselves and after a sumptuous meal, we talked throughout the night about my parents and childhood. I was to stay there for a week. Already on the second, my would-be mother-in-law presented me a number of jewels and gave me innumerable tips. They had an extensive garden full of flower plants. The house was big and old-fashioned.

"There was a big outhouse in the backside curiously surrounded by iron railings and a huge iron gate always locked. I asked Chandru what it was but he said that it was unused and contained tools and unwanted furnitures and things. A sweet scented jasmine bush was near that outhouse and I collected a handful, while Chandru gathered dark, red mulberry fruits from another side. The garden was a pleasure to roam about. When I was about to start towards Chandru, I heard a bloodcurdling noise inside the outhouse. Then I had a faint idea of running feet and things falling or thrown violently against the wall.

I HURRIED to the other side and told Chandru what I had heard but he laughed it out as a mere fancy. In fact, they had a huge dog that always howled awfully. Thereafter I

went to that jasmine bush whenever I had a chance and pretended gathering flowers.

"One day I actually saw a face in a tiny window on the wall. The eyes were fierce and blood shot. With fear, I stared at the face. Imagine my surprise, when I found it to be none other than Chandru. I called him but in reply I heard that same bloodcurdling noise repeated. How could Chandru behave like that, I wondered, and ran inside the house, to see Chandru sitting near his gramophone. What would be the state of my mind then? I told Chandru what I had seen but he laughed it off again and said that there was a ghost in the outhouse and that I should not go near it.

It was the fifth day of my stay there. Chandru's parents were always sad in spite of having so much wealth and Chandru. At times they were absent from home and I was told that they had gone to the temple. As I told you, it was the fifth day. There were four servants in the house, one to tend the garden, another to cook, a coachman and a woman to do odd jobs.

"That morning everybody was busy and Chandru's mother had engaged two men specially to prepare sweets for me to be taken to college. You see, I was staying with the warden during the holidays.

The bathroom was a new addition to the house and it was a bit aloof. I finished my bath and was about to step into the house, when I saw two fierce eyes peering at me through the outter window. It was Chandru. I chided him for waiting outside even while I was bathing. But to my surprise, the face was the one I saw at the outhouse, with cruel and bloodshot eyes. I closed my eyes at the coldness and cruelty in that blank stare. I ran inside and told Chandru's mother what I saw at the outter window. Chandru's father was dozing in the front room before the gramophone. Chandru was nowhere. But I knew he was in his room doing his thesis. Chandru's mother went pale on hearing my news and she fainted right into my arms.

"I CALLED the servants and Chandru. I could hear running feet outside and nobody came to my aid. In a minute the patter of feet was heard right inside and all of a sudden there was a wild scream and then the same horrible noise I heard at the outhouse. Somehow I scented disaster and gently placing Chandru's mother on the floor, I ran to where the scream was heard. Alas! the servants were down on the floor placing her with care. In a corner of Chandru's room, the kerry coachman and gardener were holding an individual exactly like Chandru, in loose pyjamas. They were identical like two peas in a pod but the

only difference was the cold, cruel stare of the other individual so different to that of Chandru's ever smiling and gentle look.

"That other Chandru looked at me and made that awful noise for the third time. He wanted to pounce on me but the two men were too much for his strength. Hearing the lamentation of the servants, I looked at the burden they had placed on the floor and lo! my Chandru was lying on the floor, his face blue and the open shirt revealing big blue and red marks on the neck. The eyes were open but sightless. His papers and pen were on the floor too, scattered and torn. They revealed their own story in silence.

I tore my hair and wailed. The parents were a sight indeed. Tongues cannot describe the agony of them. I had to take the part of the comforter to my Chandru's parents."

Sujatha could not resist the freely flowing tears. She did not attempt to cover her face now. She was living in that period of agony twenty years ago.

"WHO was that cruel man? How did Chandru die?..." we questioned her.

"That cruel man was Chandru's twin brother. But the wonderful part of it was that Chandru had no knowledge of a mad twin brother living in

prison so close by. Vinoo, for that was his name, was mad from his third year and he had inflicted ever so many wounds on Chandru while playing together as children. Vinoo was always bent upon doing mischief to Chandru, a very docile and sweet boy throughout. Hence the parents had kept the boy in that house from his fourth year with a trustworthy servant woman to feed him from that time. Another strong man had personal charge of him as he grew wild day by day. He was mostly kept in chain in an inner room. I had seen the outhouse after a month. My Chandru did not know that he had a mad brother and it was kept a secret from him so many years. By nature Chandru was not inquisitive and he accepted his parents' words as gospel truth and believed that the outhouse or rather stronghold contained only unused things.

THE boy Vinoo grew wilder day by day and the pitiable part of it was that he could not talk or hear. He was deaf and dumb. No doctor could cure him. In his early age, he was taken to various places by night to eminent doctors and Chandru knew nothing about it. Even the two servants in the house did not know the history of the mad boy.

"The parents wanted to change Vinoo to a distant asylum before our wedding, so that Chandru and myself should

never know that such a brother ever existed. But fate played its trick a little too soon. Somehow the servants had neglected to lock the door that day and Vinoo had escaped out of the prison.

"As fate would have it, he encountered Chandru on his rambling and the born hatred in him against his brother had induced him to throttle him to death. My Chandru might have been engrossed in his writing and death was probably instantaneous. Vinoo was a strong, sinewy fellow and my delicate Chandru was not a match for him even if he had tried to avoid his clawy fingers," she finished sadly.

"Oh God, our poor Sujatha!" was all that we could say at the moment.

"WHAT did you do afterwards?" Malati asked in the end.

"Chandru's parents petted me and wanted me to stay with them as their own daughter. The very next day Vinoo was packed out to a distant asylum. So the poor old people had lost their two children for ever. I stayed on with them. I felt reluctant to see my people and friends after the wedding. In a year Chandru's mother died in my lap, leaving her entire possessions to me.

"I could not leave the old man alone and in another

year, he too passed away. He could I live in that desolate house after that? The old man had left his property to me in his will, advising me even at the last moment to marry someone. I could have lived like a princess with so much wealth but I had no peace of mind and sorrow and past memory dogged my footsteps.

"Then I decided to engage myself in something so that I would not go mad. I built an orphanage and fed nearly fifty castaways. For nearly fifteen years I worked day and night for the children and forgot the tragedy in a way. At last I took up child welfare training. Now you see me fully engaged. I'm forgetting that nightmare little by little.

"I was a great lover of flowers. You remember me gathering jasmine outside Chandru's outhouse? But after Chandru's death I've shunned them like serpents. Now I feel vastly relieved after telling you my story. I'm a virgin widow these twenty years... Yes, I'm pretty old, exactly forty next week" she said with a smile.

We could not believe our ears of a woman gazing at her raven black hair, lovely face and fine features without a trace of wrinkles, one may think she is about twenty-five. The tragedy in her life had only moulded her fine and pure.

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Astrological Forecasts For February—1960

Planets & Your Fortune

The following predictions are based on the movement of the Nine Planets in the 12 Rasis according to Gochara as also that of Uranus, Neptune and Pluto which are upagrahas. The positions of the planets from Janma Rasi (Moon's Place) are taken into account in forecasting the effects. Those running a favourable Dasa or Bhukthi will experience the evil effects in a lesser degree and those running malefic Dasa or Bhukthi will experience the evil effects in a greater measure.

By T. V. RAMAN

During this month too "Kala Sarpa Yoga" is present. This Yoga is considered as an evil in astrological parlance. The effects will be full of ups and downs. Mercury transits to Kumba. Uranus stays in Cancer, Pluto in Leo and Neptune in Scorpio.

MESHA

(Aswini 4, Bharani 4, Krithigai 1.)

Mars, Lord of the Lagna, stays in 9th trikona in conjunction with Jupiter is considered as a Raja Yoga. Your health will be robust. Your popularity will be on the increase. The position of Venus, Lord of 2nd in the 9th and 10th houses indicates that your finances will be excellent. The position of Mercury in the 3rd and 6th houses occupying 5th and 10th houses indicates new avenues and progress. Rahu in the 6th house indicates

that you will be free from debts.

Those in jobs will get promotions. Business men will make good profits. The month is excellent for all others.

Lucky Days : All days of the month.

Household women will find the month excellent. Your health will be good. Household will be happy. The finance will be good. Some unmarried women will get married and some married women will become expectant mothers.

The month is good for those studying and in jobs. The month is equally good for all others.

Lucky Days : 4th, 18th and 21st.

VRISHABHA

(Krithigai 3, Rohini 4, Mrigasirsha 2.)

Venus, Lord of the Lagna, stays in the 8th house in conjunction with malefics. Hence take care of your health. The position of Mercury, Lord of 2nd and 5th house in the 9th house indicates financial, betterment and mental peace. The conjunction of four malefics in the 8th house indicates wasteful expenditure, risks through accidents.

The month is not good for those in jobs. Businessmen will meet with loss. People engaged in politics, social service or film acting will be held to blame.

Lucky Days : 7th, 17th and 23rd.

Household women will find the month miserable. Your health will be poor. Finance will not be steady. Women in jobs will find the month adverse. Those studying will find obstacles.

Lucky Days : 8th, 13th and 21st.

MITHUNA

(Mrigasirsha 2, Arudra 4, Punarvasu 3)

Mercury, Lord of the Lagna, is in 7th house. Your health will be good. Your popularity will be on the increase. Uranus in the 2nd house indicates that you will be financially well off. The position of Jupiter in the 7th

house is considered to be unique in astrological parlance. Kethu in the 10th house indicates that you will do well in your office or business.

Those engaged in politics, social service or film acting will find the month good.

Lucky Days : 8th, 17th and 25th.

Household women will find the month splendid. Your health will be good. Finances will be pouring. Women in jobs and those studying will manage well. The month is excellent for all others.

Lucky Days : 9th, 16th and 26th.

KATAKA

(Punarvasu 1, Pushya 4, Aslesha 4.)

The position of Pluto in the 2nd house indicates that your finances will be slightly affected. Rahu in the 3rd house indicates financial gains and courage to meet any situation. Uranus is in Janma, hence take care of your health.

Those in jobs will find the month adverse. The month is not good for business men. They will meet with loss. The month is adverse for all others.

Lucky Days : 8th, 18th and 19th.

Household women will find the month miserable due to Jupiter in the 6th house. Take care of your health. Unmarried women will have to wait the whole of this year for getting married. Women in jobs or studying will pull through. The month is not good for all others.

Lucky Days : 7th, 17th and 21st.

SIMHA

(Makara 4, Pooram 4, Uthira 1.)

Sun, Lord of the Lagna, is hidden in the 6th house. Hence take care of your health. Rahu in the 2nd house indicates steadiness in financial dealings. Neptune in the 3rd house indicates financial gains. The position of Saturn in the 5th house will keep you worried. Ketu in the 8th house indicates wasteful expenditure and risks through accident.

Those in jobs will get promoted. Business men will fare well. The month is excellent for all others.

Lucky Days : 8th, 13th and 20th.

Household women will find the month good. Women in jobs and those studying will manage very well. Women engaged in politics, social service or film acting will be well rewarded.

Lucky Days : 6th, 16th, and 26th.

KANYA

(Uthira 3, Hastha 4, Chitra 2.)

Rahu is in Janma, hence take care of your health. Venus, Lord of the 2nd house in the 4th kendra and hence your family affairs and finances will be excellent. The position of Sun in the 5th house will cause you worries and so be well guarded. The position of Uranus in the 11th house indicates minor financial gains. Pluto in the 12th house indicates risks through accidents.

Those in jobs or in business will manage well. The month is good for all others.

Lucky Days : 2nd, 12th and 19th.

Household women will be greatly relieved due to Jupiter having transited. Women in jobs and those studying will find the month excellent. The month is equally excellent for all others.

Lucky Days : 3rd, 7th and 17th.

THULA

(Chitra 2, Swathi 4, Visaka 3.)

Neptune stays in Janma. Hence take care of your health. Mars, Lord of the 2nd house is hidden in the 3rd house, therefore your finances will undergo a setback. Ketu in the 6th house indicates liquidation of debt, disappearance of enemies and financial gains.

Those in jobs or in business will have a distressing time. The month is not good for all others.

Household women will find the month rather unpleasant due to Jupiter in the 3rd house. Women in jobs or those studying will pull through. Women in politics, social service or film acting will maintain their progress.

Lucky Days : 4th, 13th and 29th.

VRISCHIKA

(Visaka 1, Anuradha 4, Jyeshtha 4.)

Though Mars, Lord of the Lagna is in 2nd house, you are having an unspent balance of 7½ years' Saturn of about 1 year and 3 months. Hence take care of your health. Jupiter has since moved to 2nd house. Your finances will improve. Household will be happy. Pluto in the 10th house indicates troubles in office or in business.

Those engaged in politics, social service or film acting will be well rewarded.

Lucky Days : 2nd, 11th and 15th.

Household women will find the month happy. Some unmarried women will get married and some married women will become expectant mothers. Women in jobs or studying will do well.

Lucky Days : 4th, 18th and 27th.

DHANUS

(Moola 4, Poorada 4, Utharada 1.)

The Janma is afflicted by the presence of four malefics. Hence take care of your health. The position of 7½ years' Saturn in Janma will cause worries about your health. Rahu in the 10th house will keep you well in office or in business. The month is not good in general.

Lucky Days : 8th, 13th and 27th.

Household women will find the month miserable. The finances will be poor. Those studying or in jobs will pull through. The month is not good for all others.

Lucky Days : 7th, 17th and 23rd.

MAKARA

(Utharada 3, Sravana 4, Dhanishta 2.)

Saturn, Lord of the Lagna, is in 12th house in conjunction with other malefics. Your health will not be good. Ketu in the 3rd house will keep you courageous and indicates financial gains. Pluto in the 8th house indicates wasteful expenditure and risks through accidents.

Those in jobs will pull through. Business men will meet with loss. The month is not good for all others.

Lucky Days : 4th, 14th and 19th.

Household women will find the month very unlucky. Your health will be affected. Women in jobs or studying will pull through. The month is not good for the rest.

Lucky Days : 6th, 16th and 30th.

KUMBHA

(Dhanishta 2, Sathabhisha 4 Poorattadhi 3.)

Saturn, Lord of the Lagna, is in the 11th which is a lucky sign. Your popularity will be on the increase. Your health will be good. Rahu in the 8th house indicates risks through accidents and wasteful expenditure. The conjunction of 4 planets in the 11th house indicates financial gains.

Those in business will meet with big profits. Those in jobs will get promotions. The month is equally good for all others.

Lucky Days : 7th, 17th and 19th.

Household women will find the month excellent. Women in jobs or studying will fare well. Those in politics, social service or film acting will find the month excellent.

Lucky Days : 8th, 18th and 20th.

MEENA

(Poorattadhi 1, Uthirattadhi 4, Revathi 4.)

Kethu is in Janma, hence take care of your health. Pluto in the 6th indicates that a new enemy will spring up. Jupiter in the 10th house indicates troubles in office or business. Sun in the 11th indicates financial gains.

Business men will have to wait for making profit. The month is not good for all others.

Lucky Days : 3rd, 12th and 19th.

Household women will find the month miserable. The month is adverse in general for all.

Lucky Days : 7th and 18th.

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