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An Unusual Story

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Today my story's heroine is getting married. Nobody is invited. She is shy.

Chhee! It seems not befitting to get married after fifty. It doesn't befit to be shy as well. Who is her husband, sitting idly beside her? That fellow seems as if he is not even over thirty. The story's heroine is sitting all recoiled.

"Dhat idiot! Can someone sit in the wedding *mandap* forever? Get up and make some tea." I tell her.

She gets up and goes inside the room. When she comes out she had undressed her sari and is now wearing a white maxi.

How swift!

On her face outside the veil, it's palpably written- fifty two years. Now the heroine goes inside the kitchen to make tea.

First she serves the tea to me. I am surprised. I mock- "Your husband might be angry if he comes to know."

She doesn't say anything. She smiles mechanically. As if I have the remote to control her.

"Yesterday you were exceedingly young?" I ask. She doesn't speak again.

“You are fatally ill today. You think you might die, right?”

That is all she says, that too being silent for almost ten to fifteen minutes.

She gets up and goes. I continue to think.

The ones who saw me speaking to her might have thought that I was insane.

Where might have I met my story’s heroine? It’s unknown. I put a whole lot of effort to recall but in vain.

When was she born? When did she turn youthful? I met her when she was already youthful.

On the first meeting she was wearing a maroon coloured *salwaar kameez*. That time I was witnessing my adolescent years.

Her hair was long, almost ankle length. Her eyes and face were mongoloid. She must have been fifteen or sixteen.

She has arrived in many attires and appearances after that.

I have always noticed a thing- though sometimes she comes with a narrow and pointed nose, big eyes, trimmed and hair tied in close fit, but she always looks slender. She has never gained weight, though her age keeps changing.

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That day she looked almost of twenty five or twenty six. As if despondent, she came with gloom of despair all over her face.

“Where are you coming from? Did you check the interview’s result?”- she said.

“Hmm”- I said.

“You failed”- she said and laughed.

“Why are you laughing?”- I asked.

“Just like that. I failed too.”- She said.

She said again- “Now you are becoming old. I have also started to live my life with struggle.”

“What will you do now?”- I asked her.

I wasn't able to decide. (At least for that moment that what should I do).

“What will you do?”- She asked too.

“I will get you married.”- I told her.

“I will be fine then.” – She said.

“I will kill your husband.” I told her

She stood with a pale face. I felt extremely sympathetic.

I asked-

“Don't you feel that I absolutely transgress your being?”

“My being?”- after a query she said- “ Where do I have my novelty? I guess my independence lies upon your clout.”

“No, to give you your life is all that I always feel. But I can't. How can I? I am susceptible.”

“Ah let it be! Leave these squabbles. Sleep. I will sleep too.”- She wants to end this topic now.

“Where will you sleep?”- I asked.

“Inside your story. Am I ever outside the story, storywriter?”- She goes away making me startled.

“Am I also ever outside the story?”

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The illness has constrained me down since day before yesterday. I feel that I will survive no more. I am ill and all alone, lying on the bed. A lonely man. Yesterday I brought a painkiller anyhow.

“Get up. Take the medicine.” She said yesterday.

“I haven’t had my breakfast.”- I said.

“Get up and have then.”

- I don’t know how I got up and boiled a bowl of water. Dipped four biscuits and ate them.

She watched me with satisfaction.

She looked more old and ill than me.

“Look, get married. When you are still in your age, do it or else you will find it difficult in future.”- She said.

“You have turned old.”- I told her without listening to her words.

“Tomorrow I could be young again. But look at you! you look as if you are almost dead. Take your medicine. You have to recover soon.”- She said.

I took the medicine and rested. She was sitting beside me until I feel asleep.

When I woke up- first I saw the old ceiling. I kept staring purposelessly at it. Suddenly I thought about the story’s heroine.

She was beside me.

“Didn’t you sleep?”- I asked.

“How could I sleep?”- I don’t know why she said that.

“I might die, you are getting old.”- I said.

“*Dhattarika!* How could you give up so soon? There are many severe illnesses that get cured. That’s so worthless.”- She said.

“You don’t know my illness. I cured your cancer because of compassion. I am a real human being of flesh and bones.

- I said. She listened silently.

I feel asleep again.

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I got her married but she is with me. Always.

“I got you married so that I could get away with you but you seem even closer now.” - I was vexed.

“You don’t want to liberate me.” – She said.

“Have I ever intended to confine you?”- My validation.

“Then?”- She asks to know more.

“What then?”- I rage.

“Do you know how you trifled me? You wrote about my existence arbitrarily. You wrote about my thought, feeling, and desires through your thoughts. I wanted to revolt but you wanted me to love. I wanted to stay as a wife- but you would opt for a divorce. Not only that- even when I was suffering from cancer you didn’t allow me to die.”

- She would say more perceptibly. I interrupted and said, -“Since when did you start to think?”

But she didn’t answer.

My question won over her this time. I said faintly from within my throat again-

“I did all these with a desire to preserve you.”

“My preservation? Tell it for sure that you love me. Or else make a vow.”

Baaf re baaf! The story’s heroine has become so alive?

“Now you will die. You will die for sure and you’ll do away with all these excuses. “- She said evidently.

“You have become very callous.”- I had to make a great effort to say this.

A kind of darkness is engulfing me. The face of story’s heroine is shrinking on and on.

“Where will you go now?” I still have concern for her.

“Me?” Inside the story. I could die as well.” She said very modestly.

“Oh heroine! How could you be so lively in someone’s story? Whom would you walk with until your last breath? Who would exchange a life with you? All humans are outside the world of stories.”

I may not live now. I have immense pain inside my chest. Severe pain grips my waist as well. My head almost explodes. There’s cough.

I cough with great effort. It feels as if all the mechanisms of chest is about to come out. It would had been better if proper medications were taken earlier. I didn’t do.

I might die.

I take a look- the story’s heroine is sitting motionless on the chair. She is looking at the clots of blood.

Suddenly she seemed almost of sixteen or seventeen. I look at her face astounded.

Gradually she turned old.

She turned of twenty, thirty, forty and shrank with wrinkles. And slowly disappeared.

An outlandish dimness started to engorge in my eyes.

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