In a small town of Heerapur, there lived an eighty-five year old Tippamma. Tippamma was a slender, brown woman with wrinkles all over her body. She was working in house of one of the Saukaras of the town for past 70 years, as a maid servant.

Srimantha Saukara belonged to an upper caste wealthy family of five. He was a kind hearted person, who treated Tippamma as a family member. His wife Radhadevi was a gentle woman. Her each day began with heap of work in kitchen. She spent most of her time in kitchen cooking delicious recipes for Srimantha.

One fine morning, when the couple was busy in completing their morning chores, they listened the loud cry of Tippamma approaching them.

Baaiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii!!

What’s the matter Tippamma? Is every thing alright? asked Radhadevi.

Bai! Sharanappa is here today. He wants my Jeeramani. You please give it to me!

But why does he need that now?

One of my sisters living in Suntanuru is lying on death bed. She needs money to recover her ill health; Sharanappa has come to take it.

Her Saukarti brought Jeeramani from her locker and handed it over to Tippamma. Tippamma gave it to Sharanappa and asked him to mortgage it. He told his mother that he will return that Jeeramani after a month and left.

Tippamma started her daily work of sweeping the house, cleaning vessels, helping her Saukarti in sorting the vegetables and so on. Once her work got over, she sat in the vast veranda of the house all alone lost in some other world.
Every day after her work she sat silently in the veranda thinking gravely about something. This thinking would affect her health often.

Tippamma came to the house of Saukara when she was only fifteen. Srimantha was not even born then. She was a tender girl then married to Siddappa. Her hard work and struggle began in such a young age. She became mother of two kids, when she was twenty. Her elder son was named Sharanappa and younger one was Gundappa.

Since Siddappa was a drunkard and not an employed man, her entirely family survived on the meager money Tippamma earned in the house of Saukara. Her two time meal was provided by the owner. She would have a little of it and take the rest of it to her home to feed her kids.

Like this, she grew her two kids and educated them till their matriculation. Sharanappa based on his matriculation got appointed as attender in one of the government hospitals of the town, whereas Gundappa worked in a shop store.

As both of them started earning, it was time to marry them. Tippamma married them and they settled happily. Sharanappa purchased land and constructed his home. Gundappa lived in a separate home with his wife and two kids. He could not build his home because of his meagre income.

As Sharanappa was elder son, Tippamma lived with him. Her home was two miles away from the home of Saukara. But she didn’t leave working as a maid in Srimantha’s house. She would complete her daily chores at home and would reach Saukara’s home by 10.

At the age of fifty she became grandmother of four grand children. Even though her two sons earned enough money to run the house, Tippamma never took a single penny from them. She was happy working in house of Saukara and took her meal everyday in the same house. She toiled hard and bought a Jeeramani for herself. After buying it, she handed it over to Saukarti. She would take it from Saukarti and wear it on certain occasions and festivals, and would return it back to Saukarti.

Tippamma was the most loyal maid of the house. When the family of Srimantha would go out for a trip, the entire house was taken care by Tippamma. She would not leave house for a single
second. She was the only trustworthy maid Srimantha had. She was taken care by Saukarti and all the family members.

As time passed on, Sharanappa got retired. He spent all his pension drinking liquor. He didn’t bring a single penny to the house. On the other hand, Gundappa met with a severe accident and lost his memory power. Wife of Gundappa and his children relinquished him and left him alone to survive on his own. Tippamma brought him to the house of Saukara and would take care of him there.

But Gundappa hardly recovered from the injury. He roamed all alone on the roads of the town uttering something. Some people pelt stones on him, some offered food and some took his help to fill the water in their houses paying him not a single penny.

Tippamma was seventy by this time. Her grand children migrated to city in search of jobs and settled there. Sharanappa lived in his house with his wife spending all his money on liquor. Gundappa’s family lived happily in their house without bothering about him a single day. His wife never cared him. Tippamma continued her daily routine in the same way. She would arrive at 10:00 in the morning and leave by 5:00 in the evening.

She fed Gundappa whenever he was around and would bathe him on Sundays. At this age when her grand children should take care of her, she was still serving her son.

Sharanappa after spending his monthly pension on liquor would borrow money from some money lender and would spend even that on drinking. When money lenders visited him often he would rush to Tippamma and plead for money. Tippamma loved him blindly. She would take her Jeeramani from Saukarti and give it to Sharanappa. He would mortgage it each time and pay his debts.

Every time when her Jeeramani was taken away, she would fall ill thinking again and again about it. She would sit all alone in the veranda staring at a particular thing.

On one fine morning Srimantha explained her not to lend her Jeeramani again and again to Sharanappa. One day he would surely lose it. But Tippamma never understood this. She was blind in love of her son. Every time he made her fool and took away her Jeeramani. And every time Saukara intervened to get it back for Tippamma.
Apart from paying the debts of Sharanappa, Jeeramani helped many others. It became a source of aid. Whenever there was some needy relative it was taken away from Saukarti to help him/her and was returned back after its use.

Once it was taken to pay the fees of Tippamma’s great granddaughter, then it was taken again for a wedding in the family, then again on the cradle ceremony of her great grandson, now it was for her ill sister…….the tale continued.

Her one hard earned Jeeramani helped these many people. It would go through several hands only to come back again in the locker of Saukarti. It was hardly used as a wearing ornament.

Each time it was given away, Tippamma sat all alone in the veranda, thinking and worrying about the return of her Jeeramani…..