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Hidden Murder

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The time of the day was December, when an old woman was craving for food. It was not that she lived alone. She had two sons and 3 daughters, but there was no one to provide her food. All her daughters were married and her daughters were too. She was almost 70 years old. Her husband was not alive. Her daughter-in-law speaks,

“Firstly clean the plates and glass. Then I will give you food.”

The ill-fated old lady cleans plates and glass from the cold water even in winter, then take her plate and ask for food, but her daughter-in-law was so wicked.

She gives her rice with a little bread and cries,

“If you will get the food, there is no need to get food again.”

It was not admitted that she was poor, her eldest son was in a government job, her grandson was also earning but she had nothing to eat. It was not easy when she used to go to the neighborhood house whenever she felt hungry and says something,

“Give me food, sister. I am very hungry.”

No one sits near her. Despite the house being so big, she lives alone in her room. Elder grandson, granddaughter, also keep themselves in their room, she decided to go in the house of her daughter. She thinks that may beshe will be entertained in her daughter’s house, she went to her daughter's house, and her daughter also works out. Her daughter's children lived abroad. After eating and drinking, she goes to do her job. After a few days, the old woman again come back in her home and became very happy to see her children. Seeing the old woman, the elder daughter-in-law said very quickly,

“Amma, youused to roam a little longer”

But her younger daughter-in-law's face smiles when she sees old woman in the house. Because now she will not have to clean the plates and glass. She says,

“Amma, Please clean the plates. Then you will get the food.”

The poor old woman started cleaning dishes in the month of January with cold water because she was hungry that day, now she knew that she would not forget the cleaning plates and glass. Until then, she will not get the food. Suddenly that same night his health has deteriorated neither she was able to get up nor was able to sit. As soon as it happened in the morning, the old woman was hungry and a small voice came from inside. She was screaming,

“Morning utensils are lying, Amma, clean the dishes.”

But that old woman could not get up from the bed, it seemed that as if the body has become relaxed it seemed that the hands had lost her life. The old woman was unable to get even one finger of hers, she was in tatters but she could not get up. She was screaming,

“Son, I am not able to get up. I have to go to pee but no one came near.”

Her Pissed off around 11:00. No one was aware of that old lady. Both sons went to the office. The daughter-in-law also slept in the afternoon after dinner. But the old lady lying in the same wet bed in the month of January. Nobody asked her to eat even when the younger son came back from his job at 11:00 pm. The old woman screamed,

“Son, I am very hungry and have not eaten anything from the whole day. I could not get up from my bed, you do not know what happened.”

The old lady started crying very fast. Her younger son changed her clothes and brought food, started feeding with his hands, the old woman was crying, but did not like to eat but she ate because of hungry stomach. She started saying,

“I do not know what happened with my health, my hands have no strength in my legs, my hands are not getting up, my feet have been stunned, take me to a hospital, how do I go to urinate? No one is going to serve me since morning. I was lying wet, I kept getting cold. No one asked for my condition. Despite having 10 people in the house, no one asked for my condition.”

Youngest son replies,

“Mother, I have not received my salary, so how can I let me take you to the hospital.”

And then he went to his room. The whole night was agonizing, no one go to near her, her body had become so bad that she could not even turn, when the elder daughter-in-law heard that the mother-in-law's health was very bad. She becomes very happy and saying,

“I will get a break from this old lady, I do not know when she dies soon.”

As soon as the morning happened, the old woman put latrine and urine on the bed. Her bed has become wet, No one come to change her wet clothes. The old woman was shivering in the month of January, her two sons went to the office. As soon as the smell surrounded the house, the elder daughter-in-law said,

“From where smell is coming, the old woman seems to have latrine, go clean the little one and it smells in the whole house.”

The younger daughter-in-law shouted,

“What happened, Amma stays on my side, you don't have any responsibility, you should go and clean her.”

“Why should I clean?” The elder daughter-in-law says, “You should clean, little daughter-in-law.”

The elder daughter-in-law went outside, locked the room, what can the younger daughter-in-law do? She started screaming angrily,

“She is lying on my forehead.”

The old woman started crying and said, "Don't tell me what happened, and don't know what happened with me. I don't have strength in my arms and legs.”

Little daughter-in-law replies,

“You eat every day. I know all your gimmick I think you don't have to clean the dishes, so you have to do gimmick somehow.”

The younger daughter-in-law cleaned that old mother's bed and said,

“Now I will not give you food.”

When her son came home, the daughter-in-law said to him,

“I have given food to your mother, now do not give food, you will have to go to office. I have to clean the latrine. The smell comes in the whole house.”

The boy did not give food, the old lady was unaware of this cleverness, and she started screaming all night, and as soon as morning she screamed,

“I am hungry, I am hungry.”

Little daughter-in-law brings two spoons khichdi and the old lady started feeding.

The old lady begs,

“Give me more food, I am hungry.”

Daughter-in-law says, “Now I will not give the food, so much latrine and urine, I have to clean.”
Saying this daughter-in-law went into her room.

The old woman kept thinking,

“I alone taught 5 children to be able to work and taught, and now I have no one to see, there is no one to feed 2 roti. Oh God, you pick me up, I don't want to suffer like this, don't be hungry, don't suffer like this, kill me, God call me to you.”

Slowly, slowly it has been 15 days, no one took her to the hospital. Relatives started coming to see her, there was nothing left in her body due to not getting food and water. Her daughters and also her neighbors started coming to see her. Her daughter-in-law started calling,

“She is not fine. This is the last time to see her.”

Whoever comes says that they should show this old woman in a hospital, but the sons had thought that she would die soon so that they did not take her to the hospital.

So they wanted to give the hidden death to her, they wanted to kill her that was a hidden murder, that's why they was not going to take her to the hospital. Once her daughter came to see the old woman, the old woman says to the daughter,

“Take me to the hospital. I want to live, I want to eat samosa.”

Her daughter went to buy samosa. As she put samosa in her mouth, the younger daughter-in-law saw her and started to scream at her daughter,

“Have you come to kill your mother? Let's go from here.”

The little daughter goes away from her mother. O God, so merciless, a mother who saves her children from the heat of the summer, rain and serve them in sickness and raise them. But the children doesn't care her mother. Slowly, slowly, she was going towards death. No one serves her. No one changes her clothes. She was hungry and thirsty. She was laid in the ground in the cold. Slowly, slowly, she started dying of hungry and thirsty. When she got the cold, finally she died, after all, the children killed her. It was a hidden murder that no one knew.

Introduction to the Author:

Pooja Kushwaha is an aspiring poet who is just at the threshold of her writing career. She is a research scholar from the Department of English and Modern European Languages, Lucknow University. She is currently pursuing Ph.D. on Poetry. She is a firm believer to make her identity. Her many poems and fiction has been published in the **Criterion International Journal, Tare Jamme Par Magazine** and many anthologies like **What If, The Lost Soul, Pain Dwelling in Beauty, Aael, Isq-E-Jahar, The Unspoken Tale** etc. Her first anthology **True Love** has been published in **2019**. Her first single author book **Glimpses of love (2020)** has been also published. She often composes poems about contemporary problems, identity, nature, God, love and also motivational poems for the society.