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Dying to Tell the Tale

Kaikasi.V.S

Lecturer,
Department of English
University College, Trivandrum
Kerala

The smell of decayed jasmine flowers, crushed under my weight. I can hear the wails of sorrow that hovers around me like an overcrowded bus. My soul parted the crowd like sea waves and began the majestic flight to heaven. What happened to me? To be simple enough I am dead. Dead! Really? Am I dead?

To shake off my earthly ties took almost a gap of ten days. I felt lonely in the eternal abode. Where are those beautiful angels whom we see in movies? And what about God? Where is he? To wander like a lonely cloud is no great adventure. What will be my Mama doing? Oh! God, why did I die?

Silence crept all over like a long awaited snake. Darkness started seeping into me and clamoured my helpless arms. The incision marks on my stomach, the last drop of blood that was split on the ground-Yes, I want to go back. If this is death then where are the other souls? Why can't I see them? To escape from this loneliness I would prefer to go to Hell or to purgatory for that matter. And to think that I was always afraid of Hell, Satan and all the evil beings.

“Nisha, come and have your dinner”.

“No, I am busy”.

“Come please. I can't let you starve to death”.

“O.K. Mummy will I go to Hell if I don't have my dinner”.

“Of course dear. You will. And.... You will be asked to cross a bridge which has the width of a hair”

“Ha. Ha-that's nice. I have seen circus men doing that”

“Sshhh.... Blasphemy. Never say like that. Beneath the bridge there will be a pond filled with boiling oil and inside there will be a group of poisonous snakes, octopuses, scorpions, millipedes, centipedes...”

“Wait, wait – How can the snakes survive the glaring heat, Mama”?

“I won't talk to you, you naughty girl”.

Silence came and sat between us like a foreigner. I tried to wink at her but she was busy eating her meal. I asked:

“Mama, Daddy is in heaven. right?”

She nodded and a stream of tear started trickling from her deep brown eyes. I started eating my dinner.

“Where is Daddy? I know he was in heaven, but where is heaven? What will Mama be doing? I don’t know for how long period I spent searching for an identity in the infinite skies. One time I met a saintly figure and it gave me a lease of dead-life.

“Who are you my child?”

“My name is Nisha and I presume that I am dead”

“You are dead, without doubt but your soul has not reached here”

“Why?”

“Look down my dear child. Can you see your house?”

The trepidating sheres split apart and the green coloured house from where I left some days ago became visible. Inside I saw Mama crying.

She has not eaten the half-cooked breakfast. She looks tired, battered and worn out. My photograph in pigtails is nailed on the wall. Oh! No... I can’t see anything now... oh! Please show me Baba.

“Of course dear, You will have to go there”.

“For what?”

“On the way to the adobe of dead, your soul caught in between those rose bushes in your garden. You have to go there and lift that small branch and liberate your soul. If you fail to do that today, you will also be like me, alone, completely isolated in the skies”.

“Is that possible? How can I go there?”

“Take my white scarf, it will take you down”.

“But remember, if you don’t come back by night....”

“O.K., O.K.”

The next moment I found myself standing in the garden of my house. How nice it is to be back in one’s house. I felt like a weary traveler who has explored the heart of the world and has now

come back to enjoy a quiet weekend. The garden spotted dry look. All plants have started drooping under the blazing red-hot sun. but I did not experience any heat or for that matter cold, fear, sorrow, joy or any other emotion. But where is the rose bush? My favourite yellow rose bush on which my soul swings like a spoiled handkerchief. Before that let me see my Mama, my house, my room, my box of white chocolates which Uncle Sam brought last week.

I reached for the alarm bell, but it did not produce a bell. Oh! I forgot the fact that I am no more a human being. Hey! The door is open. Ah! There is my Mama, crying her heart out to our servant maid.

“How could she die, Susan, leaving me all alone?”

[I am so lonely, Mama]

“God could have been more kind towards me.”

[God is not there, Mama]

“Everything in the house reminds me of her. So destroy everything. Susan”.

[Mama don't make me mad]

“Yes destroy everything”.

Oh! My goodness my Mama has gone completely mad.

The feeling of nostalgia that I was experiencing all these while was shattered without a trace. She broke everything in my room. I saw her behave like a raging storm unleashing all her fury towards those inanimate objects. Susan was trying to calm her but my mother told her:

“You too remind me of my daughter. Go away”.

I shouted my heart out and cried, “No Mama, No Mama, try to live with my memories”.

But my voice crept deep inside me and in the deep abyss it remained hidden.

Like a blood thirsty savage she jumped out of the house to our beautiful garden. I saw poor Tommy barking in a helpless manner. I have never seen Mama in such a horrifying mood. I remember how calm she was when my Papa died. At that time she told my grandmother, pointing to me:

“Sweet my child I live for thee”.

And now... Fate has betrayed her. Like a cruel negative role player in movies, fate has played tricks on my Mama. She looked like a puppet swaying in the hands of that uncouth dramatist. She reminded me of our inter-collegiate drama festival and about the girl who acted the role of a

bloodthirsty revenge-seeking lady. Yes! My Mama, my soft, sweet Mama has now metamorphosed into a demon.

“Mama, do you believe in ghosts?”

“No, I don’t”

“Why?”

“Because I haven’t seen any ghosts so far”

“Here you have one”

The two-layered sheet clad figure walked to the kitchen.

“Grrr.....”

“Ha ha. You thought you could fool me. Nisha! Where in the world does a ghost produce the sound of a lion?”

“Oh! No! you are so brave Mama, and intelligent too”

Mama has let off the poor old Tommy from the kennel.

“Go, go.. Tommy, you remind me of my daughter”

[Mama, don’t do that.... Remember we are official members of the PETA]

Mama took our fish tank and let go all fish in it to a nearby drain.

[Mama..... You’re hopeless]

Then I saw her walking towards the yellow rose bush. My favourite rose bush... the one thing which will surely haunt her with my memories.

“NO MAMA NO”

Like an ancient savage who discovers his morning prey my Mama started laughing.

“No! No! I cried again.

With a fatal blow she cut the rose bush into two pieces. Like those heroines of fairy tales she sat there and chopped all the branches....

INCLUDING MY POOR WHITE SOUL...

I heard the voice from the heaven “too late dear... Wish you a lonely ghost life”.

No! No! No! No!

“Ms Nisha! Stand up”

I woke up from my day dream and realized that I am still alive and the tragic part was that it was IIIrd period, Mathematics Class and....do you want me to complete it?

“The rest is silence”.