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## Mylo

Dr. Priyanka Shrivastava

Mylo, Mylo, hey buddy, where are you? I looked for him around the house. Finally, I knelt down to see him, yes, he was there sitting under the sofa. Moving his tail up and down, that used to be his favorite game “The hide and seek.” Common, I pulled him out. Let’s go out for a walk. I said.

How’s that, I cuddled him along the way to the swimming pool area. I remember, it was my twelfth birthday, when papa had brought Mylo as a gift. It was a small Hungarian, snow-white with black shades on his back. His skin looks as silky and smooth as one of my mother’s silk sari. He smelled of the shampoo, the name I don’t remember. I was so excited and I think Mylo was also very excited and looked happy, that’s why he jumped from my father’s hand and sat in my mother’s lap. Perhaps, he found her friendlier or wanted to assure his place in the house. Hence, I thanked my dad for the beautiful gift that I never imagined he will bring for me. When I lifted him up he poked from his hands on my head, “softly”. Papa smiled, and told me that “Mylo will become your best friend very soon”.

We all really enjoyed Mylo’s company since he came to our house.

Everything went nicely with Mylo, till my aunt came. I wish rather she had not. She was an elder sister of my father, our “Badi Buaji”. Maa told me that, “she hate dogs”. That was a real concern for me and Mylo till she is going to stay here. “Don’t worry I tapped his back, we all are with you”, he sniffed and jumped to show that he understood all that I said. “He trusted us completely.” That’s what we all love about him, and he was very caring too. For example, whenever papa starts for office and miss his keys, Mylo was always there to remind him holding the car keys in his mouth. And for mom, holding the TV remote, jumping at the kitchen door, reminding her favorite daily soap, serials. If I am not exaggerating he knew the time.

Oh, yes, the real drama began when she entered our home. Papa had informed us that she will be staying with us till she doesn’t get her own accommodation. Though, I have heard this from Maa that my aunt hates pets, was something normal as I was told that there are people, who don’t like keeping pets in their house. But I have never seen someone having animosity with a little innocent Mylo, without any reason.

But she had one, one that was very IMPORTANT. And that perhaps had changed my father’s mind. She said to my father, “how could you allow this dog, to enter your house”? “Even don’t you remember, what our father used to say that if a dog touches you even your bone gets impure, till you do not take a bath in the holy Ganga water”. “Have you forgotten everything our father had taught you?” She continued, while my father had bowed his head. Though, I could not see his expression. I was afraid thinking, what will happen to the Mylo? She said, “And well, how can you forget when a dog had accidentally bitten you, remember how much you cried. But our father didn’t let you enter the house till he sprinkled Gangajalal over your body and chanted mantras to purify you”. She said. “Hey bhagwan”, “I am sorry to say, that you people are no longer a Brahmin now.” While saying this, she

pulled her brows and her face was hardened. Maa looked even more puzzled. “And you Sudha look”, she addressed my mother, “how much you are teasing the soul of your father-in-law”. As if she had really seen him crying. She was indeed a drama queen. Because we all were standing there, our tongue-tied, just watching her face as have committed some crime. Then the major decision came. My father decided that Mylo will stay in the outhouse. Because she is his elder sister and he cannot dare to cross her words at least not for an animal’s sake. Later, I wondered, was Mylo an animal? Then why did he tell me he was my friend? Confusion!! Confusion!!. Confusion ruled everywhere. I took Mylo to the backyard, and tied him with a chain. He looked sad. “His eyes were full of tears, and his face was dull.” Yes, he was crying. But I assured him that he is going to here, just for a day or two and very soon he will be back in the home, like before. He licked my ankles, nodding in yes. He still believes in my words. That day Mylo had not ate anything. Not even the biscuits that I brought for him. He refused to eat, and did not even drink the milk, that my mother poured in his bowl. After few days, it was decided that though he will not be allowed inside the house. But he can roam around in the open area. And that went perfectly Fine. Mylo had learned to live like that, and no longer complains about anything. Every day when I come back from my school in the evening I took him for a walk. My father no longer took any interest in him. Maa use to make some occasional visits only. Next day, when Mylo went out, Aunt sprinkled the holy water on everything from the bed to vessels. She asks the servants to clean the floor, sofa, and table as she had decided to erase each and every mark of Mylo.

Someone from our neighborhood informed Maa that Mylo had just escaped an accident. We all knew this whenever he felt hurt either he use to stop eating or sit in the mid of streets, to show that he is going to die. I requested Maa to take him back, that night I cried too. But I could not do anything for him. Two days after that incident, when I came back from school, Maa told me, “Mylo had left us.” I went out to see him. But did not find him anywhere. I wondered where he would have gone. But I was happy for him, though he was a dog for them but had a self-respect.

Though I didn’t want to listen, but Maa explained to me, “why this happened?”, “Mylo had tried to bite your aunt, and had cut her leather bag”. I heard shouting, “oh my god I can’t believe this, it is so expensive. “Vinod had brought this from London.” Aunt’s words were enough to infuriate my dad who was already loaded with his office work. That morning he caned him before he left. Everyone consoled me, “Don’t worry he will come back”. But I knew he will never come back, not for me even. Nothing could replace the unconditional love with my Mylo.

Afterwards I was thinking “whom to blame for what happened”. Either we, who took him in and made him realize that he is our family, or he who believed that he was a part of our family. I could not stop my tears. Lying on my bed I was thinking of the frailty and vanity of human life. Animals don’t have words, they cannot speak, but they understand them. They too have feelings, and emotions, like us. But the question is how many of us are here to understand them, or to protect them.

**Biographical Note:**

**Dr. Priyanka Shrivastava**, lives in Bangalore. She has got a Ph.D. from Banaras Hindu University. Currently teaching in Arya Kanya Degree College, Allahabad University. She is pursuing writing as her Career. Currently she is working on her first English novel.