

ISSN: 0976-8165

Vol.8, Issue-V (October 2017)

THE CRITERION

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN ENGLISH

Bi-Monthly Refereed and Indexed Open Access eJournal

8th Year of Open Access

The Criterion 

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ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

www.galaxyimrj.com

Happy Wedding Anniversary

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Walking back home the one and a half kilometer stretch she had spring in her feet and dew in her heart. Never had she received so much praise in her life. Her friends at the Kitty Party seemed to be competing in heaping every conceivable compliment on her.

The moment she entered there was a burst of *Oohs* and *Aahs*. “Hey, she is looking a stunner!”

“She is a mobile garden. Delicate petunias and phlox all over with green tendrils delicately intertwined.”

“Really, what a pretty dress, Kamakshi!”

“It’s highlighting your chiseled figure.”

“I swear you’re looking sexy, man.”

“Don’t walk back home this evening. Or else you will turn into a story.”

Raised eyebrows.

“I mean a news story. Delhi is known to be the rape capital of India.”

“Who can tell she is forty two?”

“Not a day more than thirty. She’s looking irresistibly seductive.”

“Yes. Imagine, her bust is still propped up and proud.”

“That’s because she has no tummy. In our case, the midriff pushes our glories under.”

“Is it by Babs?”

“Who’s he?”

“You don’t know? *Arre*, Mohit Bablani. Pet name Babs.”

“He’s sooo cute! Like a doll. Feel like cuddling him.”

“We’re talking of the dress, Ma’am.”

“Must have cost a fortune, no?”

“Well ...sort of,” said Kamakshi.

“But she can afford it. The Brig (Brigadier) took an early retirement and is now raking in oodles of money.

“Unlike my man, Ugh! After retirement, he runs a one-man-burping-farting-orchestra twenty four by seven.”

“What does the Brig do, exactly, Kamakshi?”

“He’s a Consultant with an Arms manufacturing unit.”

“He’s going to do a jig when he looks at you, sweetheart.”

“Before or after he has made love to her?”

“Seriously guys, she’s looking dazzling today.”

“That’s what a beautiful dress does. It rivets attention.”

#

“Are you sure you will not like to be dropped?” asked Monisha, the host.

“No, no. I prefer to walk.”

“No wonder she has this figure.”

“And imagine this is in addition to her regular Yoga and Gymming.”

“You’ve to work hard, man, to turn heads.”

A storm of sighs!

#

Cameos from the past swam up Kamakshi’s mind.

Ranjan’s eyes were gleaming and his smile oozed love. She felt the thrill of a teen at the age of thirty eight when he would plant himself in front of her, look into her eyes and holding her face in both his hands said, “Your beauty has not faded one bit.”

The two hearts beat in sync and the desire mingled, before his evening pints and dinner. She was reminded of their wedding reception and the unusual message that Ranjan's close friend, Capt. Kathuria, had scribbled on the envelope: 'Wish both of you lots of love and lust.'

He had winked at Ranjan while handing over the envelope to her. His wish had come true.

Ranjan flaunted Kamakshi at the monthly Officers' parties where everyone was accompanied by his spouse. While the male gazes went soft, the women looked daggers at her. One of them once walked up to her and said, "I think I'll murder you one day."

She had smiled and replied in the same tone, "Will be happy to die at your hands!"

On another occasion, a senior officer's wife said to her, "I'm a lesbian. I want you."

She bowed delicately. "All yours, Ma'am!"

The lady had kissed her on the cheek and walked away.

"There's always a queue of officers wanting to dance with you, lady," Ranjan would joke with a touch of pride. "Don't forget, I'm waiting for my turn."

"You're the last," she would tease him.

"Yes, yes, I know, you're an inveterate flirt," he laughed heartily.

#

Ranjan lifted her from the waist and moved her round and round like she was a child of five.

He could do it; he was strong and sinewy. She always found his touch erotic. There was something electric to it. He just needed to hold her in his arms and she went limp with desire.

"Like it?"

"Yes," she mumbled.

"Scared?"

"No."

He went faster. She felt giddy and scared and shrieked with delight and fear.

#

She was eagerly waiting for Ranjan. Why was he taking ages in getting back? Today he was unusually late. It was already 8:30 PM. She sent the cook away and prepared the dessert. The

small hand was now touching 9: 00, but the bell did not ring. She became restless and stood in front of the mirror several times, scrutunising herself from various angles. Yes, the compliments at the party were genuine.

Finally, the bell did peel away when she was reading a Romance. She rushed to the door to open it.

“Hi Ranjan.”

“Hi,” he said.

“All well at the office? Got very late?”

“Yes, the CEO arrived from Toronto and the meeting went on and on.”

She hovered around him on one pretext or the other to attract attention.

“Tired,” he said, stretching himself and slumped into an easy chair, resting his feet on a small stool.

Then she came and stood bang in front of him. “Sorry baby. Why do you work so hard?”

“Lay out the dinner, will you?” Ranjan said and poured a drink for his usual pints.

Then they ate the dinner in silence.

She wanted to spring a surprise with the bowl of custard which he was crazy about. Maybe that would remind him, it was their wedding anniversary and he would shout, as always, “Hey, H-W-A.” and notice her and her new dress.

Ranjan had switched on the T.V. in the bedroom and was watching BBC. She generously garnished the custard with pistachio and cashews – he liked plenty of nuts in his dessert.

She carried the bowl eagerly, with a smile on her face. But when she entered the bedroom, he was sprawled on the bed and snoring.