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## The Light

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“Dr. Saheb, what are the chances that ensure vision to be restored in Roshni’s eyes”, asked Vishwas, desperately and shyly.

“Roshni? ok, your wife”, the doctor calmly replied. “Yes”, Vishwas lisped now.

Now the doctor started elaborating on medical condition of his patient, he continued, “look sir, her optic nerve is severely damaged and apparently no chance if I don’t allow you to swim in false hope. I am afraid that loss of vision is irretrievable and permanent”, with these words the doctor patted on shoulder of Vishwas in sympathy and swiftly made his way from the door with a loud bang on very heart of Vishwas.

The response was blood curdling, how to suffer a blind wife for long life! The burden has now become more burdensome and painful, shameful also-to live with a blind wife, ha! a social disgrace. Vishwas was now moving to the room of Roshni to comfort her in such a loss; to share; to assure her his companionship in such a need. He was about to slide the door, suddenly a tingling sound of bangles held his hand. His mother cautioned him. “What are you doing?”, said she impatiently. “She is sleeping but we are awake; she is cursed with eternal sleep & darkness but we are not. We can see and we have seen your bright future with new bride, handsome dowry and prince like grandsons. What has she given us? nothing, not even a glimpse or promise of future, just a glutton to feed on your hard-earned money; leave her, we should move out of this place before her kinsmen arrive”, She covered her head & moved to the main door of exit. Vishwas, himself was not aware of what emotion forced him to follow his mother but he followed her spell-bound out of the door.

Roshni was in ICU. She was slowly recovering from physical and mental trauma. She opened her eyes but only darkness crept in. She struggled with herself to move around but she could not grope for the way in darkness. Suddenly the door creaked & someone entered, maybe a nurse. Roshni called out for someone, so the visitor replied, “Sit down, don’t roam around, you cannot see, you are blind now”. Roshni astounded at once, all her blood froze into veins, she felt numbness in all her tissues, her tongue paralysed for a while. Before she could ask anything the visitor slammed the door pushing her in utter darkness.

After a while, the doctor came in, a hope kindled in her heart, she asked the visitor, “Are the lights off? I can’t see anything”. The doctor replied, “Sorry ma’am, you are now blind, we tried to save your eyes but the hurt on your eyes was so severe that we failed in our effort.” Now doctor was about to move but instantly he felt a strong grip on his arm, he turned back, his patient drew herself closer to him and whispered, “Sir, I want to see my family.” “Nobody is around”, said the doctor.

She stunned into silence but quickly recovered and responded to her doctor, as if recuperating from momentary uneasiness, she said, “Sir, what will happen to me now? What will I do? Where shall I go? The doctor was moved by the words so emphatically slipped out of Roshni’s mouth, he hesitantly muttered, “You see, we cannot allow you to stay here and moreover, you are not capable of working here in hospital; anything that I can do for you is that I can send you to blind school where they can train you to overcome your handicap and live with dignity and respect. I can arrange if you so desire,” he stopped waiting for her response. She summoned all her courage and mustered the strength to decide for herself, first time in her life. “Yes I can, but how long will I have to stay there? When will I unite with my family?”, she asked in very cold but frenzied voice.

“Forever, Your family bears no ties with you now, Your husband told me that he would remarry .You see, a blind wife can serve no purpose to him now. It sounds cruel and bitter but it is the truth and tragedy of your life, accept it and move on, I don’t want to light any hope in you with light gone from your eyes”, said the doctor a bit shyly with pityful eyes which she could not notice. The light of eyes was gone for her but tears still remained in still eyes. Two tears welled up in blank eyes & rolled down her cheeks but God is very kind. He took away light from her but gave her the strength to adjust to callousness of the world. She nodded in affirmation and after couple of hours she was in her new but permanent home.

She was now alone, lonely, left to her darkness. She reminisced about the scuffle, she had with her husband, she wanted to have her daughter but she lost her in a long sleep. The effect of anaesthesia made her stumble against her husband; he, being a man pushed her to the pillar; the injury resulted in permanent loss of eye sight. She lost both her Princess and eye sight in blink of an eye.

One thing was nice, she was now free from all cares, joys, abuses, burden of work; first time in her life she availed herself of such a long rest. She got ample time to her share to indulge herself in a self-dialogue; to introspect and to retrospect ugly past and to plan an uncertain future; for the first time, she was left to herself, her care; for the first time, she introduced herself to herself as an individual; for the first time she was to think of herself and for herself. Weaving the threads of life, she surrendered herself to sleep.

She was neither asleep nor awake when someone gently shook her. “Ma’am, your morning tea!”, The soft voice exclaimed. She abruptly jumped out of bed; first she was not used to such a soft tone and kind words, secondly before the tragedy struck her it was her routine to serve tea and eat abusive words in breakfast. It was a big and unusual change for her but agreeable, at least. The attendant helped her munch something soft, soggy, butter like that melted in her mouth, she offered her to drink something, taste in milk like. For the first time, she ate to her fill and taste. There she had only one work i.e, rest in her couch. She was now free to think; to compare her previous life with this one; to analyse and evaluate the situation. She was more struck with amusement and less with awe and fear. After couple of hours, another visitor came and softly asked,” Ma’am what’s your interest. We will try your accomplishment in the field of your interest.”

'Interest', the word pounded on her afflicted soul, the most. This simple word, kindly spoken too reminded her of a devastating trail of torment and torture. Despite the passage of several years, the memory was distinctly clear, crystal clear, decked up on the shelf of mind. Once she ventured to show her interest in bangles and thrust colourful bangles on her wrist making a noise so loud to her brother on his writing table( Though he matriculated after availing himself of mercy chance to qualify) that he held her wrist and smashed all her bangles striking them against the wall; the blood oozing out angrily of her glass-pierced wrist spilt all over the place including wall, floor and even smeared her clothes and brother's too. Before she could attend to her wounds, she had to clean the mess enduring undue thrashing from mother for creating ruckus in house; for spoiling uniform of brother (He didn't change uniform of school even after lunch but he was a boy, so no need) and also for polluting the place with blood of a girl. That day she had to stand in a corner for the whole day without any food but her offender walked around munching his food gaily, rubbing salt on her wound. After that incident she concluded, for herself ,two things; she would not ask for anything; she would not show any interest in anything or follow her taste. Meanwhile, the attendant shook her out of slumber, she recovered but maintained her silence. This was a turning point in her life and she was now to decide her course with her choice and her responsibility. Earlier she had latter to her credit but now even former (choice) was too her right.

She boldly told the visitor, "I could weave dexterously but now....," her voice was choked with tears. "Ok", said the visitor, "We will do the best for you, your lesson will start from tomorrow, be ready".

She took one month or so to fully train herself but time added to her potency and her craftsmanship was remarkable. The days rolled by, her talent brought her to the door of brand of woollen garments. She was now richly paid for her work. Appreciation of talent and her relentless struggle, zeal for work and habit of constancy earned over the years accentuated her enthusiasm and multiplied her confidence. Conveniently, she rose to the position of executive director, a post earned by dint of hard work and selfless, honest service.

Today she, seating in a comfortable chair reminisced about her struggle, her imposed reluctant struggle. Tearful eyed glanced through the card of invitation. In her brail script, she felt that it was from the same blind school.

The evening was quite pleasant, everybody was waiting for the chief guest. She got off the car and was carefully guided to the dais. It was her turn to speak; it was turn of a person to speak who was doctored with silence; who knew silence as the only gesture or maybe the voice.

She said, "When I lost my vision, I thought I lost my light but I gained it rather; I lost physical light which offered testimony to my torture, my silence and resignation to cruelty with no thought or choice of mine but I gained celetial light of self-dependence, dignity, grace which could offer inspiration to such people who suffer one more handicap in their otherwise, already handicapped life." Elegantly she descended the podium & moved to her interests with a stick tapping on ground.