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## Unrecruited Love

**Dr. Gagana B. Purohit**

Reading news papers on a hazy winter evening, cool breeze accompanied by winter chill, the atmosphere was made even daunting by the uncompromising and undulating ideas of my mind. The afternoon agility of children outside was contrasted with sweltering silence inside with a remote rhetoric to ruminate over the lost time of a shortened day, not being able to complete chores as per the scheduled plan- had its toll on me. In fact, nothing fell to its usual line despite the desired efforts in its best possible way.

The cold had exceeded all limits and the Para dipped beyond expectations that year. Dense fog had out-clashed the caring warmth of the winter sun, giving the ever sprawling smoke it's all important advantage with the lingering odor of the rotten vegetables on the roadside only adding to the gloomy feeling.

In such a sequestered ambience, many winters back, I had met Kalpana, on an eventful Swarswati Puja day, quite in a nonchalant manner, to start the unforgettably forgettable journey of our respective study outside, and important lesson of life inside. She came with a sincere elegance of a quiet student with a lot of inquisitiveness in her mind. Of course, I, on my part, was eager to lend my hand of help to her on a minute standby mission; she seemed to be little interested in such a cold relationship, like the lazy winter afternoon, devoid of warmth and composure. My relentless pursuit of a friendship fell into deaf ears and my memory down the lane was strong enough to complete the unfinished story by enough stretch of imagination.

Her dark cloudy eyes had saved the day for me, though. I stared at her stealthily, willing to spare any number of valuable hours to initiate a dialogue. But in total contrast to the bright splintering and gorgeous looking dress, she was cold, like the chill of the winter afternoon, in her response. But relationship was beginning to break out, the promise of a lasting relationship for which people would like to sacrifice the greatest good of their life; it was always fettered by its fleeting nature. More than the relationship, for impish childishness was never considered seriously, neither then nor now, the attraction was all that mattered. It was said that the first impression lasts long.

I remembered her chubby cheeks and disheveled hair, over grown by any means in comparison to her age, for a girl of barely five. My gay abandon of a child gave in within no time to such a sight of abstraction, arguably without complain. That day went to record books, only to be preserved in memory, without being displayed for use; it was rather out of service. The light of love being blocked by an opaque hatred casting a long shadow on our tender relationship was looming large. But it was the bracketed beginning that made the story all the more interesting.

That eventful winter afternoon had been stored in my memory having a lot of repercussions in my later life, even after the winter chill abated long ago. The warmth of that relationship had replaced the winter woes remarkably well, even after so many years. The attraction, unacknowledged or whatsoever, had made me crave for a connection with kalpana.

Soon we became closer to each other, drawn on by different circumstances in different times. All negatives had appeared positives to us, ignoring our weaknesses at will, the positive points being the crux of the relationship. Each started out to fill the void created by the other; she became the perfect foil to me within no time. We were bound by a sacred thread of childhood fantasy.

The world was strange to the relationship, characterized by the world of two novices; a certain tenderness being at the centre. Ideals and promises of different dimensions had occupied our minds—sacrifice was our controlling emotion rather than worldly demands. Childhood heroes had a terrible sway in our minds than our personal needs. It was a time of fall and fortunate fall it was. Free birds in the sky with tender wings were our followings, unfettered and freed from worldly happenings being our strong point. We had taken the impossibilities of our life to task.

One essential truth about being human was we always fell short of an ideal we worshipped and groomed to perfection. Forced critical distancing being its credo, we could not but simply accepted it. Little could we do about our inescapable past, nostalgia being the ultimate end? One could hardly afford to such terrible stuff, and for children it proved even more daunting. One was left wandering, what went wrong exactly.

Sweet-sour memory of our tender love and the final parting came rather quickly than expected that I had tried to conquer over the years only to be tormented by the ghost of it time

and again. Moreover, its intensity doubling day by day had its toll on my matured mind. I tried to take out the bitter truth from my mind, more and more meticulously; all these proved to be exercises in futility.

The forceful forgetting attempt which had developed a kind of close intimacy with my mind and heart for long; it had cast a spell in my shortened and budding life which I wanted to continue had never been easy. I had built castles in the air with Kalpana but that relationship, in its infancy, had evaporated like a fig of imagination. It's a reminder of how strong some small relationships could always be. She had always been my ideal other all these years. How could I forget her even when I didn't want to back out the relationship under any circumstance? After all, I tried to keep the promises I made while the circumstances demanded otherwise.

At a mature age the childhood reveries often appeared immature, the tales of adventure and fantasy and their super hero cast had occupied a child's psychology; their absolute individualism offered something to revel. But they had no place in the space-constraint real world. The loose ends were difficult to hold together.

This was the excuse I offered for the broken relationship.

The afternoon news had given enough clue to immerse in the state of affairs deep before my son came up with his regular complain of non-compliance to his daily needs, ignorant of my endorsements and my fool's paradise. I thought of her poor mother whom I had loved uncomplainingly over the years and with the forte of firm faith on the sidelines. Neither my son nor his mother would ever know about Kalpana.

In the mad rush of life where things would take its own course despite our best efforts to plan out them in advance. I tried to uncover the petals of the pages of my life, as I did in case of a difficult novel, page by page, reading between lines, to have a sort of grasp of the difficult course of life. Matters of prime concern had paled into insignificance compared to the difficult turn of events; the life had taken so far.

Down the memory lane the relationship offered a perfect foil for all other relationships, both short term and durable, enabling me to a life of near perfection in an early stage. Other important relationships were riddled with problems of immediate concern, offering me little

respite. The closest feeling of being intimate had its moments of glory which was immediately followed by palls of gloom in keeping with the human fate condemned to experience both happy and sad moments side by side. The eventful winter that year, now I realized, had given the impression that life had come to a full circle. My heart was full of new surprises every now and then, the hair-raising experiences bear witness to the pure and innocent relationship. In contrast, the present one was based on lies and deceit of regular pattern; without hypocrisy there seemed to be no life at all. Agony and ecstasy were not coming side by side, prolonged period of pain and suffering, of sickness and squalor decided course of future action.

Kalpana and I both lived our own life. However, we had extracted different tastes from our life altogether, despite my hard efforts to accommodate her ideas when differed on many occasions. She had left indelible foot prints on me with her persuasive and sweet voice, when I analyzed the weight of her neutral vigour now. I was simply ignorant about her suggestions and ideas and took pride in my rebellious stand. She on her part was tired out, arguing incessantly, as she did, finally adopting a withdrawn position. I had a vague memory of all her convictions which proved to be an exercise in futility.

She was like a little damsel, free from all facets of worldly worries. She had a simple chemistry of live and let live. I adopted a hard stand to change the world with my rebellious efforts. I was complex with all kinds of subtle ways of life; she, on the other hand, made life normal by accepting life as it was. I was my sole refuse which made her impatient at times. Time ran out fast with no signs of change at sight in near future. Kalpana took everything in her stride; I used to accept a cathartic stand, making her life miserable. Hours of brooding had no positive impact on her mind, critical contexts eluded her simple vision, and the literal words had brought her bouquet of surprises. She was sensitive to the first-take meanings while I had tried to grasp deeper layers of meaning. Her lack of maturity on all fronts had annoyed me a great deal. I had little patience to cope with her lack of critical skill, but her frankness and ever jolly mood could compensate for the vulnerability, but I could hardly realize her innocence on offer. The rift started off on minor counts taking serious shape in due course of time accounting for differences on display.

I was successful in creating a circle of like-minded people to fight for good causes. But Kalpana had her own plans in place for each occasion. My leading roles to the run up of the

selection of a head boy, not because I had potential in studies but because of my concern for others didn't interest her or her family either. The most attractive quality I possessed, which drew both of us closer, was my combative quality in fighting injustice. She could accord to me a safe place in his heart and mind for this sheer vitality. She was complete in all respects; her appealing face had rare charm in it which could not beat my piercing gaze. Too many perspectives and viewpoints always troubled my mind where as her opinion on matters of personal importance was crystal clear. She never hesitated about matters which interested her most. She tried to convince me on these matters too but my rebellious self didn't prioritize her ideology of preference; she hardly was interested in matters concerning others. Unnecessary indictment had played spoilsport in our relationship.

Before we knew each other well we parted our ways. That infant love, if it really was a love, had a long bearing in my life, though. She could not oppose my ideas of a rebel, of correcting the never changing society. My concern for others had little to do with her pure personal perspective. Her rich parents' luxurious vibrancy in providing her all great things in the world had little consideration for the small promise they had made to unite and fulfill wishes of Kalpana and myself. She didn't have the courage and resilience to question her parents' decision. Of course, my lack of confidence and conviction only added to her apprehension.

“You are a rough boy to handle. You can never come to my level; there is a lot of difference between our families, although we belong to the same caste and our families are strongly related by blood. Boys like you would always try to exploit a rich girl like me for personal use. You are after me not for love but for my wealth.”

She was speaking like a Judge, with confidence and maturity. This was enough indication of a strained relationship. I was convinced now that a relationship was often determined by the give and take relationship. I could never be treated on a par with her financially well-off status.

Soon we parted our ways. She went to the nearby town to do her upper primary and I was destined to continue my studies in a bigger village which had upper primary school. I observed her slow and steady rise from a calculated distance from the view point of a detached onlooker. Her rise coalesced with my downward journey. I became wayward and careless with all types of notoriety to my credit.

In the town she was in the thick of things. Another close and more importantly, common relative came in close contact with her and our relationship was on a receding spree with the inception of a renewed relationship with renewed vigour and vitality. My main weapon, the ideological strands were undervalued in the face of utilitarian needs of life. Besides, the new relationship matched her status perfectly with lots of age difference, though. I looked at both of them with dissent and disdain. In my personal life I wanted to brook under pressure a little bit but to no avail. I did not want to make compromise with things I disagreed with. I wanted to accommodate all liberal norms in order to put up with outside pressure. The utter failure in each of my relations- building pursuits made me hard like a rock which readily reflected in my behavior and external dealings.

She came to my rescue one day with her advice. It was more a scorn than an advice. “We have to part our ways owing to differences in all respects. First of all, we are classmates and are equal in age. Secondly, your job is not guaranteed right now. We have to wait for another fifteen years or so. My parents are after me to shed of their responsibility. Thirdly, it is not in our destiny to live together”.

I was disappointed with my adventure; I could not look back at her. I started to dislike my gaze. But I became more assured that day to face the challenges of life in a firm way. I was no more interested in her again. Nothing more was left in the relationship now. I recovered just in time to move far away from her life.

I recovered well to live my life with style, the way I liked it to be. Perhaps that lesson early in my life had paved my way for the future. Life had settled into a nice rhythm. I found myself fitted into the role of a perfect husband, a duty-bound father; something of an impossible mission being shaped into accepted reality.

I just wondered leisurely what turn my life would have taken had I broken down with that strained relationship early in my life. I could never imagine beyond this. I had to look ahead not behind to realize the unfinished roles assigned to me.

Kalpana was something which would haunt me very often, reminding me of my nostalgic self; when I had fallen in love without the warm invitation of a morning sun to effectively counter the hazy afternoon and cold winter night.