

## GOLD TO MARIGOLD

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Happiness chases me these days! He brings me to a... Wait! What it is called...Ah! Yes... to a five-moon or star or...a hotel, I don't know what it is called. Actually, I have never entered a hotel before. But today I enter the best one. How lucky I am!

He too looks very happy today, after all his dreams are gradually turning true. See, how my son Prabin's face bears a broad smile today. I have never seen a smiling Prabin, I always remember a weeping, lamenting Prabin. But these waves of happiness have washed away all his sorrows today. How lucky I feel seeing him enjoying his meal! You see, dear readers, I have completed mine without even noticing what has been devoured.

Wait! Wait! Let me wash my hand, then I will take you on a small tour of this magnificent hotel. But, where should I go to wash my hand?

Oh! Who is he? A nice guy with a white shirt and black pants! Is he coming towards me? (Oh Nirmali! Yes, he is coming towards you.) How awkward! It is too embarrassing.

"How can I help you, madam?"

"Hands?"

"There is the basin madam!"

Thank God! He left. Let me see where the tube well is...

"Madam, let me show you the wash basin. Please come."

Oh my God, he scared me. Let me follow him silently. What is it? He is turning something on. Oh, my goodness! See from a tiny object a fierce stream of water coming out.

"Madam, please wash your hand!"

What shall I do? Let me see what happens...see how I hesitantly put forward my hands to this small stream of water. It is cold. Let me wash my face too. Sprinkling a handful of water on my face, see how I close my eyes... feeling the cool of the water over my face.

I slowly open my eyes. What is it? I am standing in the backyard of my house holding a spade in my hands. Is this a joke? A dream? Or an illusion? What is it?

“Maa, finish it up before the daybreak.”

We are standing in the dark. It’s midnight. Shhh...shhh... don’t make any sound.

Yesterday I saw a dream, you know, where the *Dangoriya* appeared before me and said that under that jackfruit tree in our backyard, there was a hidden pot of gold. And, this is an expedition to unearth that pot of gold. Let me move my hands fast.

See how the cool breeze kisses our cheeks, but still, sweat oozes out of my face. Hey you...please put aside that brick... “*Tang..tang*”... what is it? Wait, wait ... give me the lantern...What? What? See...

Shh...Shhh... let's go back... quick... quick...

Urghhhh... how exhausted I am! Tired you know, but... but happy. Our life will change now...

Let us wash ourselves... Yayyyyy... We are rich now... Yayyy....

“I shall take you to a five-star hotel Maa! Yayyyy...”

“Shhh... shh... don’t make noise. Let’s wash.”

Hey you... please pump the tube well for me...

Thank you... see it is cold. Let me wash my face. Sprinkling a hand full of water on my face, see how I close my eyes... feeling the cool of the water over my face.

I opened my eyes... What ... What ...What kind of illusion is this? I turn towards the dining hall... standing at the same place... and see, how that boy is staring...

What kind of noises these are... Who is yelling?

I run... run... and run... crossing the first corridor of the hotel... Oh my goodness! It is our backyard again! AAAAHHH!!... running... running... thank God here is my Prabin, but yelling in pain... a fish bone has got stuck in his throat...

See... now I have money; but again I am still helpless... my son is dying... my son is dying... please help... help... help!

Dipak... Diipaaaakkk... Prabin’sfaaather... where are you... oh he is dead long back... I don’t know what to do... let me run again... I am running... running... stop.

“Maa....aa!”

What happens to this boy?

“Prabin...Prabin... wake up my boy!”

I smile at him...

“You are dreaming my boy... and I know your dream... nothing’s happened dear. Let me bring a glass of water to you.”

I am turning to the door of his room... turning and tuning... on my way out from my room, in the drawing room, look, that is the picture of Prabin... hanging from a curved nail... and the garland of pale yellow marigolds is swaying... swaying... and swaying...