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“Solitariness”

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She intensely desired for solitude where she can remember the pleasant mornings of her home, can touch the smooth layers of darkness spread outside windows during nights, can read a book if she wishes to, may hum something and by this she may recollect her scattered self carefully. Solitariness was very necessary for her but here, in this strange kind of a house, nobody allowed her to be alone. Perhaps all of them loved her so much, but it was not easy to let these people realise that a fragile plant stoops down and gets withered due to heavy rain, it dies of suffocation.

There was a possibility of stealing away a few moments at afternoon and just then Kamini rushed in with her friends. Whole house was filled up with their loud voice. They were stuck with a thought of going for a movie only. She hesitated a lot but got convinced by force. One of the elder women of the family advised her too that “let all of us be together, it’s not good to stay alone.” “Our Kamini will take care of that, she won’t let her be alone only! Very talkative and adjustable Kamini is”, mother-in-law had said. Everyday somebody would come to meet. Discussions would all be the same. “The texture of this bangle is good. This Saree is given from our side, during the *Vivah* (engagement), right, not at marriage. That one is different. A pearl earring from her side, and in utensils, the whole dinner-set...” Nobody paid any attention in her interest. Kamini used to say that my sister-in-law sings, but she never asked anything like what has she learnt or what does she like. It was one of the talks like, my sister-in-law’s skin is very nice or her hair is very long. Now she was realising the meaning of what does ‘to languish’ mean, it would be fine only if she gets the time alone.

This house as such was a house of noise. Shouting, screaming, noise, nobody was feeling a need for solitude. All the times after evening were dedicated to Dhiren. She has to get ready as soon as he comes, has to go for outings, she has to hear the words of love what he knows. She had come here from quite a different family background. She didn’t like to speak much. She was nurtured alone, was brought up amongst many books-music-paintings. How enthusiastically and with dedication she learnt Bengali, especially for Rabindra Sangeet! There was a strong desire that she will be able to sing such type of nice songs, she will make others listen to her. When they went for outing after marriage for fifteen days, there while passing by the mountains, or while holding the water of the stream in palms or while feeling the cool breezing greenery, Dhiren didn’t remember even for a single time that a song may be heard on this occasion. But then it was not Dhiren’s fault. He was not a man of music. Many of the selected songs lingered on her lips.

She liked the cool-wet mornings of hill-stations. If Dhiren was not with her then too she liked to sniff the air standing out there. Dhiren used to get irritated on looking her enjoying alone like this and holding his hands around her shoulder insistently used to take her in the room.

Dhiren didn't feel much comfortable in open space. Once she had got very angry; she had in mind that how great relief it would be if Dhiren could be acquainted a bit with her real self through that anger! In front of her surprise she found that Dhiren took those fiery words of disliking like a garland of flowers. He smiled at thinking this anger of caressing, laughed out loud, made fun of that. For the first time, she could realise that there isn't any medium through which she can pass her message to Dhiren.

That's why the longing for solitariness became strong after returning back from there. So many things could be possible if she could get that so-called 'her moments'. She wasn't comfortable at listening to her own self in these gossips of all the family members, in this loud screaming of the stereo. Anyone would just rush behind as soon as she would go for outing or rush into the balcony if she could get time. "Why so alone? Is there anything wrong?" - Here, in this house, there was a typical belief that if something happens then only a person would sit calmly.

Dhiren had to go suddenly at Bangalore. Dhiren said many a times the same thing that it is an urgent work of company, so he has to go, and kept on saying this until his leaving home. "You shall become alone, you won't like that. Do you want to go to your parents' house to meet them for some days?"

She didn't go to home. If that solitariness has to be found in this house only then it is meaningless to elope from here. Dhiren was not to come back for fifteen days, each moment of those fifteen days was very precious, it had to be handled with care. It was the first hour of night, when Dhiren's eyes were not stuck at her only. Half blossomed buds of flowers were seen from the window, there was fragrance in the air. She felt like singing something. After neglecting her thought, she listened to the cassette of songs sung by her. How strange that voice, heard after many days, sounded like! She read for late night and then rolling over that soft bed sheet at ease she felt like a small girl. She embraced the pillow as if she hugged her mother. She got a sound sleep. After a long time she could read like that so it created a colour of hibiscus in her eyes. "Sister-in-law doesn't seem like sleeping, she might not like to be alone!" - Kamini cracked a jock. She laughed with satisfaction. Days without Dhiren passed away quickly. Dhiren returned back.

And then Dhiren's voice as if crossing that deep darkness of the seven seas, hardly reaching to her, shook her away by hearing-"Did you feel very lonely? You didn't feel good without me, right?" The touch of Dhiren's hands was hardly sensible. There was some thrill, but it wasn't because of that touch. Suddenly a sweet song poured in her whole existence. Each letter of the song was making her wet like the layer of cool breeze. Nobody was concerned about the victorious inner song. She, among the sky touching trees, totally alone, was roaming and singing her favourite song...*Tumi mor pao nai parichay* (You have not really known me)...*pao nai parichay* (couldn't know me)...By roaming she had reached at a state where Dhiren or anyone would not be able to reach. Her solitude was within her only, she was alone only, very alone.

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