

## Unheard Melodies

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Sanjana was back home from office after a day's tight schedule. She felt tired and exhausted more than ever, that day. Opening the window facing her bed, she let fresh air in. This was how she entered into a world of fantasy, every evening. She spent her evenings watching the clouds and the different shapes they take and make. Sanjana felt that the loneliness within her had grown up so much consuming her charm and beauty. She cried over her fate to live such a lonely life and still show herself happy to the society. Society would not know anything...she thought, about her soul that kept longing ....for a companionship, a shoulder to rest and a pair of feet to walk with her! She never found anything appealing that way in her husband, Arjun. Arjun was a typical software guy and spent his leisure in the new mobile and mp6 players; he kept changing from time to time. Sanjana never felt the warmth of a partner when she was with him. She performed her duty as a wife. It was to her a ritual and was at times shocked at the imperviousness of Arjun's heart. He never had bothered to make her feel comfortable, never had made her feel that he was her loving husband to whom she owes her heart and soul! His approaches were so dominating and violent that she shrunk and cocooned herself within the darkness and still silence of her heart. As days went on, she even lost the sense of liking or disliking anything in life. She often said to herself, "I could have rather lived alone, than to live together and feel alone." Living alone was accompanied by a soothing silence. But the loneliness that she suffered had created a turbulent storm in her mind. She had no other outcome, but to die out in silence. She had not the luxury to feel positive and confident about herself: that there was a beauty still left in her, the beauty of silence! She kept away from people and crowd.

Society ..... she hated the word... society...that had ruined her life with a lifeless relationship to carry around her neck all along... till death. And what was more burdening was the fact that she had to make a happy appearance before the damn society, which believes that "Arjun is a loving and caring husband." He earns a lot and keeps his family happy with all the riches required for an easy life. Arjun boasts himself of having a beautiful and educated wife. He never fails to take Sanjana for any party. For him Sanjana was a commodity that he owns for pride... just as he would wish to have the latest model cars, sophisticated cell phones and ipads....a "sign value". Sanjana was too tiny to fight the unseen law makers and the unwritten rules of the society. She imagined many times to jump deep down under the earth to hide from the society that would not allow her to speak up her needs, from the society.... that had fastened her to a grim and lonely life, that forced upon her a marriage devoid of love. Sanjana felt she lived because she couldn't die.

Her only solace was her office, where she worked as a computer operator. She left behind her worries at home and stayed calm and collective for the eight hours in her office. Work was worship to her and it was like she was silently meditating within herself. Even there she spoke less and lived alone. When she was free she read the books that she carried with her wherever she went. She had a great taste for arts and literature. And this was the reason that initially attracted Rohith who was a programmer in the same company. Rohith was so much carried away by the ways of Sanjana: her mature, poise behavior and her attitude and sincerity. Once he discovered that she used to visit the district library and made it a point to get some books for her from the library.

Sanjana borrowed and returned them with a smile, as a token of gratitude. Rohith had never heard her speak and was curious to know how her voice was. It was always an “m”, “mhm” or “ok” in reply from Sanjana for any number of questions!

Back home Sanjana felt tired and exhausted and was fast asleep. She was tired not of the day's schedule, but of the silent, monotonous life...life devoid of love. Sanjana was carrying and was soon expecting her baby. She was secretly wishing it would be a boy so that her history does not repeat to her child. She didn't want her child to be imprisoned in an adorned cage. Arjun was all the more excited. He was more pre-occupied in arranging grand celebrations and parties and was excited to boast of his fatherhood. He hardly bothered about the longings of his wife as a pregnant woman. Weeks passed and Sanjana had a baby... a boy baby. Arjun arranged for a pompous party inviting all friends and relatives. Rohith was also there and was so happy to see Sanjana after a long time. He brought her a book to read. He took a look around her room. It was decorated with fur dolls, stickers, flowers etc., and the ceiling had a galaxy sticker with planets, moon and clouds which gave an impression that she was a lonely fairy. Sanjana smiled again and accepted his gift. Smile was her only language and it almost captivated Rohith. He saw a blue diary with beautiful stickers on the outer cover. It was written on the first page “I speak to myself, not for the eyes of others.” Obviously, it was Sanjana's diary and Rohith was happy that she spoke at least to herself, if not with none other. Yes, Sanjana spoke to herself gazing through the window. Now she had the company of her son who looked out along with her through the window. Sanjana now loved her solitude and silence and would not like to be intruded upon. She had learnt to love her life in her own way. Her life with Arjun was a silent collapse, she had to leave herself behind, at a point and proceed forward in life. She imagined that her true self, her soul, was left alone, aloof somewhere in the remote past and leaving the one half, the other half carrying her body and breath marched forward in life. She became a breathing doll devoid of soul. She developed a sort of inferiority complex that she is incapable of being loved and cared, a mass of flesh in her partner's eyes.

After three months she joined office and Rohith had visited her house along with his wife a few times and with his friends a few times. Arjun engaged him and gave him good company, so as to appear good in the eyes of the society. Rohith enquired about her health as she had joined after three long months. Sanjana said, “Am okay”. He just couldn't hear her whisper and guessed it should be so from her lip movements. He was reminded of an incident in the past when he visited her home: Sanjana came up to Arjun and told something which only Arjun could hear, understand, decipher or whatever it was. Rohith was curious to know what she said and how Arjun understood it. He always compared this with his wife's loud noise when she dominated him and argued with him endlessly. Rohith started affiliating his mother tongue to a language used for quarrel and confusion and each time his wife spoke in such a way, he felt like closing his ears and shutting himself in a vacuum, so as not to listen to any noise. Silence became his language; to convey anything out of love was through silence to him now. He felt silence was musical, melodious, soothing and serene. He felt deeply that Sanjana's presence in the office brought him a feeling of security. Her presence explicitly underscored how he had felt homeless and orphaned in her absence. It was like he had lost his self somewhere and felt like a refugee, driven out of life; of time and space, with nothing to live and no reason to live for. This was a strange feeling and he felt he should overcome it slowly.

When he reached home, Rohith hugged Renu and looked into her eyes. He read no love in her eyes and were made up with black borders through which he couldn't penetrate. He immediately thought of Sanjana's passionate eyes. He had not watched them closely. But he had noticed them flutter, when he approached her; those two butterflies that spoke out her feelings. Her joys, her sorrows, her love, her fears were all through her eyes that she conveyed. At times he had felt he had been captivated by her mesmerizing eyes and stood dumbstruck. He had developed a sort of soft corner for Sanjana. "Is this love or just sympathy?", he couldn't really understand. "Even if it is love what is the use? This is a torture", he felt. He was torn apart. He can never even say this to Sanjana or anyone else. Society will not accept this, he feared. He was willing to live out of the society... in the farthest corners of the Earth if it allows him to live with his love. But no ways, she was married and is a mother now and he was also married. Rohith was tossed by his inability to do anything. This was painful...like walking on fire.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!" shouted the security and ran into the office urging everyone to get out. It was 10.00 AM in the morning and the whole company was immersed in official stuff. People started running and there was chaos. Rohith immediately searched for Sanjana amidst the grey smoke. He saw her standing there all alone. Even in the smoke he could see the fear in her eyes. He grabbed her hand and brought her to the back door. She was dumb folded and fear stricken by the blaze and tears filled her eyes. Rohith felt her hands were chill and she was shivering. He brought her close to himself. He could feel her body shake and shiver as she sobbed heavily. He could feel her eyes flutter on his cheeks and in a few seconds all movements of her body stopped. Rohith realized something went wrong, that she was collapsing and was going to blank out. He wanted to call her with all his soul, "Sanjana". His voice and words failed to come out. He was shocked not more by the fire accident, but by the thrill of holding his love, feeling her softness, hearing her heartbeat and the minimal utterances she made. The moment of long wait had all come to an end... here she was in his arms; he patted her cheeks and checked if she was breathing. He ran to the corner, fetched the bottle of water, splashed it on her face and poured into her mouth. He held her up in his arms and rubbed her chill hands.

After an hour Sanjana woke up to find herself in a hospital. Arjun was standing there with their son and Rohith was present too. Both were so happy to see her wake up. Sanjana was soon asleep due to the drowsiness caused by the drugs. She was still not out of her shock and cried and sobbed and jerked in her sleep. Rohith cried aloud to himself, "*My love, am there, be assured.*" He felt like literally crying of his inability to hold Sanjana's hands with love, to soothe her, to comfort her, to take her to the paradise of peaceful sleep. He almost got irritated by Arjun's behavior: "What the hell he is doing... speaking on the cell phone ... explaining the incident to people... why not throw that mobile down for sometime... and sit beside my sleeping beauty. ... she is panicked."

For two days Rohith was in the hospital, helping Arjun and Sanjana and then she was discharged home. Months passed and Sanjana had her second son too. But she still felt insecure, she was never happy. The window through she looked at the sky started inviting her to heaven. She started bothering about the other part of herself; she felt she had abandoned in the midst of the journey of life. While she was weaving sweaters for her kids, she often used to think, "*Why not weave my soul and body together like this in beautiful colors. My body feels incomplete without my soul!*"

She was wasting herself and her only joy was to see her kids grow up. Arjun decided to leave the kids who were a little grown up now, with Sanjana's mother for their studies. This made her lonelier. She became thin and weak and developed more health complications. In her silent prayer, she longed for an easy death. She yearned for the liberation of the soul from all the sufferings of loneliness. It was a silent and cold night. She woke up from a dream. ...a little girl was calling her, "*get back, it's late... am alone.*" It was 2 in the night. Sanjana switched on her table lamp and started writing. She dropped her pen and diary down as if in deep sleep. ... *never to wake up!* The family doctor confirmed that she had died of heart attack. Arjun was totally dismayed and didn't know how to console the bereaved children. Rohith received the message and rushed to Sanjana's place. There she lay... still and chill. The silence this time was heavy. Rohith felt like embracing her, putting her on his lap and cry aloud. He controlled himself so as not to bring disreputation to his silent angel... who had turned to dead silence now. He watched Sanjana being carried away from her golden cage, all set free, free to fly like a beautiful, tiny bird to sing and hop to any branch, any tree. She can sing, not in silence now, so loudly and the world will be enthralled by her musical tone. She was travelling for the last time, she was travelling alone silently, this time no one went along with her, not the family, her friends, not the society!

Days went on grey and grim, black and dark. Rohith often visited Sanjana's house. He saw Sanjana in her children. He couldn't own Sanjana, her love and innocence. But he took ownership of her silence, as if it was his legacy from her. He spent silent hours gazing at his angel's portrait, her room, her window, her dolls, her half – completed paintings and half made sweaters. He saw the flowers on the trees; he was reminded of how her gracious fingers danced to an unheard rhythm as they moved up and down, front and back until she wove them into a beautiful garland of marvelous colours and fragrance. She was epitome of grace!

Arjun decided to rent his flat and transfer his job to Bangalore so that the children are not haunted by memories. Rohith noticed that Arjun was also searching for words now, when he spoke. Arjun lost the roaring laughter, the loud words, and the fast movements, which in fact made up his unique, dominating personality. Sanjana's silence had gripped the whole atmosphere, he thought as tears rolled by his cheeks. Rohith's only solace was that space and he couldn't part with it at all. He told Arjun that he would take care of the house and live there. Arjun was happy about this idea and decided to leave Sanjana's room undisturbed with her few tiny belongings that she always used. The day of departing came and Rohith saw the family off in the airport with all tears. Had Sanjana been with them, how happy things could have been! Rohith for a moment thought of the silly jealousies he had over Arjun, when he held Sanjana's hands or patted her shoulders unintentionally during conversations. Now he felt, he would have been happy if Sanjana had lived....just lived.... lived as Arjun's wife!

Rohith came back and sat on the window side where he often saw Sanjana. "What was there my baby that held you up for hours, for days and for years?" Rohith saw the clouds and the way they danced in the sky. He could see nothing in the clouds, than Sanjana's face, the silent and serene looks in her beautiful eyes! The smile and that is all that he saw in her... the lifeless smile. He cried aloud this time.... As if he would no longer contain the grief and his loneliness gave him the license to do it. After some minutes of outpour of feelings and tears, he drank a glass full of water and tried to calm down himself. Silence gripped his heart and mind and the whole room was immersed in

silence as if it were a grave yard.... It was an eerie silence and he was in fact afraid of it. There was a gush of breeze through the window and the papers in a blue diary moved rapidly in air and Rohith was in a way thankful to that small possession of Sanjana, for having broken the silence. He held it in his hands with lots of love and care as he had one day held his beloved in his arms. Running through the pages slowly, he came across his name "Rohith" and he stopped there. He read and re-read his name in a deep voice as if it were engraved on a tomb, an epitaph in his darling's heart.

The lines ran so: "Rohith held me in his arms.... I lay there as a child.... *I felt I had travelled years in the past .... to infinite past .....* and was in my mother's womb... floating in the amniotic of love and care.... I instantly felt that he was standing there in between me and my grief and that moment was my paradise... *my paradise regained....* I realized the relationship between time and space ...how a moment had transferred me in a wholly different space.....*the moment was mine.... the space was all mine.....* I had inscribed the golden moment in my heart ....never to be erased by the storm of my life. All my silence started singing in my heart... my melodies were heard in his soul as I heard his heart beat in tune with it. *He did not speak anything at all... I heard no sound...but I could feel him call me "Sanjana" from the depths of his heart ....* I could feel his lips pronounce my name .... I could feel it from the movement of his lips. Yes it is ....it is....my name..... *Sanjana! Sanjana!* my name, it is years since I've heard someone call me by this name with so much love....it was in my childhood, my dad, mom and friends called me so. It was like life blood ran all over my body from my brain to my feet.... *I realized am born again....* It was such a feeling which no words can explain how I felt like.... *to know that am alive... am living....* and that I was traveling a long journey and that I had no one other than Rohith with me and we were travelling into the past.... I felt as if he put me together; my shattered self; he lifted me, now along with my soul which I had left behind years ago.....assuring me as he held me in his arms, *"My love, am there, be assured."* In the hospital I slept like a new born infant roomed in with its mother....experiencing the warmth of the mother and exploring the colourful world in its own way. ***I AM WITH ME NOW!*** *body, mind and soul all held in inseparable affinity to each other in one single moment... in one single embrace.* Rohith had showed me how much a man can love me, love me unconditionally. This love had rendered me eternal and I would want nothing more in my life. I felt like standing on the roof of the world and saying aloud to the society that I had once and for all broken all the shackles they had tied on to my hands, legs, heart and my lips. When I woke up again I said to myself, *"No one should marry... never... until one feels in the deepest corners of his heart, 'I will die if I don't get her or him as my partner in life, my other half. Without him or her I am just a body devoid of soul!"*

Rohith was shivering. *"Is it me? my darling, my angel, my life, my love, my hope, my home, my Sanjana?* As if he would not wait for anything, anymore, he ran to the beginning of the date. It was January 19, 2007. The day the fire broke out in the company. Rohith confirmed that Sanjana had recorded the moments of the fire accident. All the sorrows that he had controlled with much difficulty, came erupting out wildly. *Sanjana, Sanjana, my Sanjana! Oh God give me my life back....give me my Sanjana back...Oh God. Why such a fate....why with me? Why did you bring her to me? Just to leave her sleep in her grave and me cry like a lost child like this? Oh my God! Take me away.... Take me to Sanjana....before I kill myself.... let me not breathe anymore."* He ran like a frightened deer here and there and came to the window and talked silently *"Sanjana dear, do you hear me? Am here baby to hold you, to soothe you, to comfort you and kiss you.*

*Come back to me my darling. I want you. Let us live a life as a man and his beloved wife! Let us be one body with two souls, one soul in two bodies. Sanjana, Sanjana, why didn't you tell me this my dear? For a moment I could have added meaning to my vain life. Oh! Yes! You don't speak at all. But your silence spoke millions of stories, how did I not read this in your lovely eyes. I will accuse your eyes for this. They were mesmerizing ... each moment I looked into them I was taken into a trance.... I had never been myself...intact with body and soul... the moment I looked into your eyes.....Ah those eyes! Those eyes.....those tiny little butterflies in your flower like face.... your fragrance! my dear Sanjana!"*

There was a call in his mobile and Rohith let the phone ring. He didn't pick up the call. It was from Renu. He walked down to his car and drove back home, grief stricken as if a five year old son had lost his mother in a mob...as if a father had lost his beloved daughter in a crowd, his only meaning in life!. As he entered his house, Renu came running to him and hugged him. Rohith was reminded of the moment he held Sanjana in his arms, her feather like softness ... the slender creeper clinging on to him with all fear. He cried within...and desperately wanted to cry aloud. He did not know if he was dead or still alive. Renu's voice brought him back to the mundane world. Again he went in to another world for a moment "m", "mhm", "ok". Each time Sanjana said "mm" it was as if his unborn children called him with innocent love "papa" and the sound was heard within himself, his heart, his stomach, he did not know where it was actually, the call that shook him totally and he felt like taking her in his arms and hold her close...very close.....He said closing his eyes, "my baby, why don't you break your silence and speak a word?". Renu was shocked a moment. She hugged him so tight and he struggled to breathe. He opened his eyes to see Renu and not Sanjana.

Rohith went and shut himself silently in his room. Renu grew hysterical. She started shouting at the top of her voice. Now for the first time Rohith couldn't hear anything. It was words and sentences that Renu spoke. These held no meaning to him now. It was as if he was in a foreign nation and he need not bother about anyone's speech as he would not understand them. He can walk on the road not bothering to speak to anyone or listen to anyone. His language was silence and he was talking to himself and his dear Sanjana, all that he had not spoken to her when she was alive on earth. He felt, Sanjana's diary speak to him: "*With these words uttered in silence in the depth of my heart, I thee wed*". He was happy to see her as his bride, shy to look at him with her mesmerizing eyes. In a ceremonious tradition he held his bride all along the way to a paradise of endless joy!

"Joy! Joy? I had never known what it is for the past many years mummy", Renu shrieked out to her parents who had rushed there on receiving her call. They were both furious to see Rohith, who came out slowly. Her mother shouted that they are taking their daughter back home as they could not see her cry anymore. Rohith stood helpless. He was in a way guilty; guilty of doing to Renu what Arjun had done to Sanjana. He felt at least Arjun was ignorant of the fact that he was doing something wrong. But Rohith prided himself many a time in his early days when he was a bachelor that he would give his wife a happy life, as he knew to read the heart of a woman. Yes, he was capable of loving a woman unconditionally. Unfortunately, Renu never gave him an opportunity to get closer and was neither interested to know her husband's needs. He stood silently and saw Renu go away with her parents. As he had expected she never bothered to turn back and look at him once; and once for all with a little love!

Rohith was drenched in memories and spent the whole night waking from his silence to the little sounds he heard in the stillness of the night. The sky was dark with just a new born moon and it was a very long and tiresome night for him. The night was filled with a prolonged dream and he smiled when he felt the strong presence of Sanjana within him, lying on his chest like a baby. Now he claimed that it was not Arjun who had lost his partner, but he had won his wife back from a dark cave after a long siege. She was in him totally filling up to the brim, his body, mind and soul. He could feel the light weight of her silky body and he ran his hands on her alabaster cheeks. He felt her breathe and move near him, and heard soft sounds, like a baby who wakes from sleeps and babbles in its own language. He spoke in his dreamy sleep, "*Sanjana baby, sleep dear, am here, be assured.*"

The next day, Rohith woke up and started packing up his things to move into Sanjana's flat, with all the feelings of a husband and his responsibilities to get back soon to his wife who is awaiting his arrival. He reached there and found everything still. "Is this all dream or does anything happen at all on earth". He went to the window and opened it. He looked up to the sky to see if the Sun really did rise? Does the universe exist at all! He spent every minute as if it were like an hour! A day was as long as a year! The silence killed him little by little and he was taking hold of another legacy of Sanjana. He had started waxing in depression. He kept his eyes shut as if not to see the world! The huge, wide, open world which could not offer a small space for him and his Sanjana to live and love! No sound, no speech was audible to him. Everything appeared like a negative of a photo, while his memories of Sanjana alone existed in his world! He was sharpening his memories of Sanjana day by day and each day she became brighter and more beautiful, just like a portrait that turns beautiful at each stroke of a committed painter. He was dying in the imagination of a life with Sanjana!

As to wake up from his trance the postman pressed the calling bell and handed over a letter to him. It was a divorce notice from Renu. He was not shocked or pained at all. In a way he liked it and appreciated it. Renu, unlike Sanjana had the courage to remove something from her life that would not be helpful in any way to proceed further in her life. He appreciated and respected her self-respect in this aspect. "*Had my Sanjana known to respect her flawless self, she could have decided on what she wanted in life. She could've told me about her life, if not to me, to someone else. My angel was silent and all that she spoke was after her death, only when she passed away from this mortal world!*" Rohith started lamenting again from the bed near the window: "My God, what will I do! I had imagined that she was living a happy and full life with Arjun. And that was why I had not wanted to tell her my love and disturb her happy life. It is all gone! God! God! Take me to the irretrievable past, erase those dark and distressing moments in my life. Get me back to Sanjana or give her back to me! Give my Sanjana back to me! Sanjana! Sanjana! Rohith cried and cried until all his sorrows and sobs turned into sleep, to meet his soul mate in his dreams again.

Rohith woke up the next morning from an easy chair and the first feel he was gripped with was guilt. He was torn with guilt of ruining the life of Renu and this only added to his pains! He could not even cry now. He had drained all his energy and tears. But still his wounds were fresh and his pains only increased. He decided to make arrangements for the divorce so that Renu would feel free to find her own way and proceed in life. He felt the Sun was too scorching for his eyes and

the world was too strange for him to face. His life had been shut within the four walls in Sanjana's home. He now realized why Sanjana had felt so shy to face the society, as he came out to see the streets. People around him were looking at him strangely as if he had landed in that house from another planet. Anyway he decided to go out the next day. He said to himself, "I'll be back soon. My Sanju will not tolerate to be alone at home for long!" It was Sanjana, Sanjana, Sanjana all in his mind. "*When did and where did Renu live in my heart? Did I really marry her? Did I ever feel her as my wife? Did she enjoy being so even if I had entertained that feeling in her? Why should I give her divorce at all?*" he questioned himself. He decided that he would do the ritual of divorce as he had completed the ritual of marriage once for the sake of society.

Days rolled on... Months and years went on in silence. It had become habitual of Rohith to read the diary as if it were a holy book. He was losing weight and was often sick. He did not care about his health and found solace in his voluntary confinement. One day, he took the last page of the diary in which Sanjana had written and started writing as if it were the conclusion of the silent story of his beloved. The conclusion she had forgotten to tell or rather silenced within her, fearing the monstrous society. "*This society had given birth to millions of Sanjanas, Renu, Rohiths and Arjuns. In fact half of the world brims with such crazy people who staged puppet shows within the drama of life! He prayed all Gods that that must be the last Renu, the last Rohith, the last Sanjana and the last Arjun. Let not the society intervene in any individual's life as it had no rights to strip off the identity of any individual whatsoever.*" As if it were the final verdict in a judgment, his pen dropped down and Rohith was traveling into his past for a few minutes. It was almost 9 years since Sanjana passed away. Rohith was feeling like he was going to reunite with her in heaven. *He looked through the window and it was his last gaze! the silent gaze! the eternal gaze from which his eyes never turned away!!!!.*

Arjun was informed of Rohith's death by one of his neighbours, and he came to do the last rites of Rohith. He had sent word for Rohith's friends and relatives and was sitting in Sanjana's room. He looked at the blue diary on the table and was feeling emotional to see Sanjana's handwriting in it. With tears in his eyes he started going through the pages. He paused where Rohith had once paused and read the contents of the diary fully. He cried out "*Sanjana, I had never imagined I had been so cruel to you. Why didn't you tell me at least for once?*" It was as if Sanjana's portrait was mocking at him. "*You should have asked me this years before when I lived in this house, as your wife.*" *Sanjana! my dear, "I should have talked to you, given at least a moment of my life to you.... To whom I owe all my life. .... I had failed as a husband, as a companion, as a partner as a soul mate, Sanjana. Sanjana! how sweet it is to call your name! how much you could have liked if I had poured out your name from my soul. Sanjana! Sanjana! Sanjana ! you are so lovable! I had missed everything in my life. I had lost all in a day I came to know that I had not lived with my wife, but with her body! Sanjana, you had defeated me! Your silence had doomed me! I had been incapable of loving you and I find myself reduced from a human being... too tiny .....too insignificant against the vast depth of our silence!*

Arjun got up and moved out Sanjana's room. He saw Rohith lying still there, still and serene. It was like he had seen him yesterday in a party, ...speaking so amicably with all who came across in his life. Arjun stood before the body of Rohith with mixed feelings and all of a sudden he burst into tears. His sons held him by his shoulders and made him feel calm. *Arjun told his sons that*



*they should perform the last rites of Rohith!.... the rights that were due of a son to his father's death! This would be the right way to pay tribute to the departed souls, he thought!* When it was all over, Arjun came back to the window and looked at the sky. *For the first time he realized what emptiness is!* It was like a vacuum and he shamed himself for having given his loving wife a life span to live with this pain! He promised Sanjana that he would never fail as a father. In a week, Abhishek and Avinash decided to get back to Bangalore. The elder one Abhishek was already in a job and Avinash was doing his final year in college. Arjun wanted very much to live in the house. But his sons insisted that he should be with them.

The next day he started to get ready for the departure. He did not have the heart to leave the home, which now seemed a sacred place to him. He spent hours just gazing at the bed where Sanjana slept; her clothes, her diaries, her pens and all that she used. Rohith had preserved it as if it were a museum of art, a temple where the holy Goddess lived! He saw her handbag... he opened it for the first time...the bag that she had used on her last day ..... the bag had been preserved by Rohith and it looked like she had used it till yesterday! The bag contained a few pens and colour pencils, half – finished paintings, some chocolates and stickers and a few other things along with the photograph of Abhishek, Avinash and Arjun! Arjun had often yearned for a daughter in his life.... *He had failed to see the little child in his wife!* He switched on her mobile phone. There were very few calls from his mobile to hers. He felt like crying aloud. He felt how pleasant it would be to hear her answer his call! He dialed a call from his number...the ring tone went on.... It was all the same...the melodious ring tone that she used to have on her mobile! He then pressed a call from her cell phone to his...it went on ringing...,and the words ***“Sanjana Calling”*** appeared on the screen. He sobbed and sobbed and embraced and kissed his mobile phone as he read and re-read those words: ***“Sanjana Calling.” Sanjana, my wife, my dearie! I just can't wait to see you, I just can't wait for you to call me! I want to rush to you, be on your lap and embrace you! Forgive me Sanjana, as you would forgive your own children for their misdeeds! I beg you! I plead you!*** Every moment was like an adventure through the past, with a never ending search for some lost treasure. He, for once looked through the window and looked it from inside, wishing secretly, “Sanjana I'll be back soon. I can't wait long leaving you here!” But he was also filled with guilt if he had the rights to share the rest of his life with Sanjana. Will she accept him forgiving him for all that he had done to her? *With one final look at his palace he locked the door from outside so as to let the resting souls sleep inside undisturbed!* He knew there are going to be gossips about his home and about the people who lived and died there. People around were waiting to weave stories. But he had decided to ignore them and raised the glass doors of his car, so as not to hear anything.

“When are we coming here next Dad? “ asked Avinash, just to bring in a different conversation that would enliven the situation. Arjun replied “for Abhishek's marriage. Is it alright Abhi?” he asked him looking at his face to observe his expressions. Abhishek replied “As you wish Dad” “When is Abhi's marriage Dad?” again it was Avinash. Arjun replied in an assertive tone, that shocked his sons *“not until Abhishek finds himself a girl.... not until he tells me, ‘Dad I feel I will die if I don't get this girl as my life partner, my wife and my soul mate.’”*