

THE PRACTICAL MAN

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He turned the key in the lock and opened the door. He felt really tired and weak. He flung the lock and key which fell on to the ground. He crept in with angry brows. It looked as though he has committed some horrific mistakes. His footsteps were heavy, not just that but also his heart. His eyes were bloodshot. His fingers began to tremble. He searched for someone but only silence welcomed him. He saw a newspaper lying right side of the sofa. He took that and dashed it against the wall. The newspaper was portraying the list of students and their photographs who has secured marks in S.S.L.C examination. The sound of pressure cooker broke the silence. Mr. Krishnan has gone for his morning walk and somewhere he has seen a newspaper and he has become brooding. His wife Kamala was busy in kitchen but never forgot to him the coffee. Kamala said “has your coffee dear”. His heart felt guilty but managed to respond. Kamala after a while entered the hall and was shocked to see the coffee untouched. Mr. Krishnan began to question her about the S.S.L.C results. Being the wife of a teacher she believed that marks show, not only the intelligence level but also the hardworking and perseverance of the students. Now the bell started ringing in the minds of Krishnan. He felt he has done a terrible mistake to such a charming woman. He stammered “Kammu... I just want to tell you something”. She sensed something was wrong and asked him to blurt out. She touched his shoulders; he sensed some shrill and moved away. He began, “I have done something wrong but that was years ago”. Tears won the race before words began.

Kamala was sitting in her bedroom crying and wiping her tears. Krishnan unable to bear it tried to leave the room. Kamala spoke in anguish, “what did I do to you? How could you...” she sneezed. Argument flew in air. Mr. Hari, father of Krishnan entered the room. He apologized for coming in the midst of husband and wife but he was left with no option. He said he knew what his son has done but was waiting for the moment to see when his son can tell. Kamala couldn't take anymore; she tried to run from the room but was held back by Krishnan. He said, “His name is Hanumanthappa”. Kamala exclaimed “Hanumanthappa? “. It was three

years ago the same date when S.S.L.C results got published and this boy, Hanumanthappa had a pale face but shimmering eyes. And in an interview, he said that his father was a coolie who earned 40 rupees per day. So he was unable to pursue his studies. Seeing this Krishna's heart was burdened. Seeing the postal address in the interview he wrote a letter stating that he was interested to meet him and it would be nice if he comes to Bangalore. At that time Mr. Hari entered and was able to read his son's mind. Also suggested him to give him some money for travelling and to buy decent clothes. He knew his father was a practical man and obeyed his words. Kamala's eyes brightened and wanted to know more. Hanuman came to Bangalore but didn't want to go to Krishnan's house. Moreover he said that he was tired of sympathetic eyes on him and wanted to maintain those as secret. Mr. Krishnan was unable to see his tears and agreed. For three days they roamed everywhere. Krishnan questioned his future plans, likes and about the places which interest him in Bangalore. To his astonishment the boy was noticing the schools only and he told that he wished to stay in Bangalore and study. Also he wished it would be better if Krishnan adopted him. Krishnan closed his eyes for he knew what he was supposed to do.

Kamala with tears in her eyes questioned, "Where is our son?" Krishnan was astonished to hear it and took her to a place to show where Hanuman was. It was tribal village called Ramanathapura. Kamala was confused as she expected him to be in some International boarding school. After walking few hours they reached a school, though it was evening still lessons were taught and children were playing outside. They entered a classroom where a boy was teaching for kids. It was none but hanumanthappa. He cried, "Maa..." Kamala was shocked to see him there. He explained that he came to Bangalore with selfish intension of getting into a school and doing his higher studies but it was Krishnan who made him understand that if he comes to Bangalore only he will be benefited if he remains in his tribe then the future can also be educated. Kamala smiled and came to Krishnan who was waiting near the gate. He looked apologetically. Kamala calmly said, "Let us go home Somu will wait for us". Krishnan began "I am sorry I should have..." But kamala closed his mouth with her hands. She said loveably "darling, being a practical man and rose by another practical man, you could have been more practical by telling it to me". She chided him to move. "Do I deserve any punishment?" asked Krishnan. She winked and said "wait till we get home and it is going to last forever". Krishnan closed his eyes for he knew what is going to happen. Kamala, "darling..." for which Krishnan says "yes madam". Saying so both began to walk forward.