

**Pramod Ambadasrao Pawar**



# *Resilience*



Nyaa Publishers



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**Dr. Pramod Ambadasrao Pawar**

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Dedicated to  
Aashna & Parth

## **Preface**

Resilience is a fictional story about a socio-cultural play of different phases in a woman's life, created in the midst of my literary opus of poetry and writing of literary theories. This is a touching story of Rose, an innocent girl who meets unexpected events in her life, however still she never gets defeated until the harsh destiny smiles at her. Life is a scourge that causes great sufferings to her.

She loses her parents, friends, and even husband in the air crash who returns or not later is a big thematic suspense to the readers until the end. She passes through many ordeals in her life, however still she never gives up struggling, is the core of this novel.

I hope the readers will love reading the novel. I extend my sincere thanks to the publisher.

I always love my dear readers for staying engaged with the text.



**GRAVEYARD: A FINAL CALL**

A scorched red-eyed sun with pampered chubby cheeks spreading its golden-skinned rays all over the sky was feeling shy in a rainbow and a bit agitated to fall down on the bank of river. They lost in a tuneful rapture currently after screwing scarlet, tiny holes into the unfertile land of hope. The rays pinned down steadily to kiss grey stones on the stunned cliff wearing a scarlet gold necklace. The silver-skinned rays painted with the tints of rainbow to beautify their ambience on a burning breezed land rested in a sound sleep. They inaudibly relaxed into dazzled beauty in peace silencing the cold breeze of the frenzied ocean.

The flying birds were looking for the lost ways in deep sky. The helpless and mute birds found the earth infertile as they failed to spot out a single drop of water for quenching their thirst. They hurriedly

journeyed towards the destination altogether to reach the land of hope. The skeleton-shaped dark leaves with perturbed minds waved their hands in the sizzling wind to the sharp rays. The drowsy yellowish leaves were fluttering down the earth to rest into grave silence. The birds were in despair sobbing into the twilight to the ardent meet with the dearest ones. The soil pined for lost love and got drenched into water to merge into a unique settlement of life once again.

Yellowish leaves left for the parched land moving in tiny circles into the air boosting to be very high and noble in status. They waited for a cold winter to gush into a little within while they were unskilled to stand by heat and dust on the land. People were struggling for water with empty buckets and pails in their hands as the thirsty land had absorbed water into her. The burning sun was relentlessly staring at the dead bodies on the land through his reddened eyes of fire. The life on the earth was dead for the frenzied rays, had fallen down from the deep skies. The banks of rivers were parched and thirsty to quench the desires of time. The ways were filled with snow, grey stones, and marbles.

Uprooted by the gale, trees had fallen across the ground and blocked all the ways of pedestrians, motor cyclists and cars . No stagnant water was distinct at sight for cooling the eyes. The entire air was filled with heated particles refused to rest into the land. All lives seemed to be vagrant and wandering, stuck in auspiciously into the labyrinth of time. The sun overshooting the rays of fire on the earth lay like a dying patient on the stretcher motionless and silent.

I was nowhere hHowever, at the piles of dead bodies at the cremation with lingered hopes for his survival on the mind. I gently glanced at many weird dead bodies on the pyre for the cremation and burial in the crowd. My penetrating mind was much stressed to identify the lost face in the darkness.

As I entered, a cat was crossing my way when I stepped onto the graveyard. I promptly recalled the gem words of my grandpa who used to say, to get back ten steps straight away, and then proceed further. I did what he had been told even though I hardly believed in superstitions, which were inculcated deeply in me by the culture I was born and brought up. Thousands

of black crows were hovering over me, repetitively warning me about upcoming signs of ill-timed death of an individual. I was utterly scared to behold all that as a nightmare. I made up my mind to ignore all signs of danger coming across me unpredictably on the way. Still I was peculiarly reading all movements of the foreseeable nature that incessantly hints me repeatedly at the death of a man whom I love very much. The red, red burning sun overhead was creating the impressions of the lost upon me. The wind-breeze blowing in friction was continually hammering me about a ceaseless flow of cruel time. It was 12 O'clock sharp. The trees were swaying from deep roots breaking the silence of the graveyard. The fluttering leaves chatting with yellow-colored dried leaves fell on the ground whirling and dancing. Birds sitting in a queue together on the electricity-insulated wire were modestly staring at my new presence in the yard and commenting on me. They were making a fun of long faces of people in the crowd gathered there. I was heart-broken and in distress and my salty mouth was parched in the sun. I couldn't find a single drop of water to quench my thirst. I was thirsty and alone on

the way to nowhere. I felt reeling and knelt down on the ground unconsciously under a tree of dark shadow. Meanwhile, a cool brook came to my sight nearby and had water hastily. I was just like a fish that has thrown out of the pond mercilessly and left struggling for survival. Water in the pond was inviting, cool and sweet to me. Stagnant water manifested the stillness of life and the cruel time assassinated and trapped me in. I was fully embarrassed and inexplicable to myself. To be or not to be – that was my destiny and decision. I could neither live nor die for myself. I could not wish to live in the absence of my love and die leaving my sweet heart, Riya, behind, lonely and distressed. My ceaseless sufferings seemed ending nowhere. I reclined my back to the tree and recalled a few sweet memories of my lost love in tearful eyes. Yeah! I miss my Ray very much now, my sweet husband.

Ray was a playboy with a towering, gallant and gracious outfit. He was in love with the girl he encountered anytime, anywhere and anyhow. He expressed his deep love for the girl at the outset. I

screamed while reminding his harassing the girls many times. His physique was magnetic, gracious, and eye-catching that any girl used to fall in love with him. I was no exception for this. However, my dreadful past had kept myself away from him, as I never wanted to divulge my past and trouble him anymore. I never wanted him to love me because I was conspicuously displeased with my own life. However, I honestly loved him when I found him supporting people by donating money to the orphanage and the poor. He was simply straightforward, benevolent, and romantic in temperament. He often helped the people in need and made their careers bright.

Standing alone at the bus stop, I was very late for my office on that day. The buses were over-crowded, non-recurrent and a very few in number. All of a sudden, a red car approached me slowly, a blue glass of the car went down and a good-looking, gallant figure with goggles spoke out mildly. I was stunned to experience Ray for the first time, he said.

“Excuse me, may I help you?”

“Sorry,” “Thank you very much.” I replied.

The car then moved on and again came to me after ten minutes.

“Excuse me; I think you need a lift, don’t you?” He said.

I need it desperately as I am late to my office. Sorry, I cannot get in the cars of strangers.

“I am Ray,” “Is it not enough to introduce me to you the way I am?”

“No,” I said, “Do not tease me, or else I’ll lodge a complaint against you at the police station.”

“Madam, I help you and you think of complaining me.”

“How weird you are!” He said.

“Look, there is an old woman sitting under a tree, waiting for a bus. Why don’t you go and help her? She’ll bless you too.” I said.

He parked his car to the extreme left side of the road. He then went straight to the old woman and asked her to get into his car. She refused to come along with him in the beginning, However later who knows how she got ready to be with him in his car.

“Oh madam, look, the old woman you pointed out is now sitting in my car. Now you can sit beside her.”

He said.

“No,” I said.

Then another woman passenger standing beside me in blue jeans with a pink T-shirt said to me,

“Are you coming or not? It’s urgent for me. I get to go to my office on time at any cost, so I’m getting into his car. I ask you to come with us because he only wants you to sit in his car, it seems to me. Come on, nothing happens. Why are you thinking so deeply?”

As I was getting late and there were no buses available to go to my office on time, I got into his car and reached my office on time. It was our first meeting that impressed me a lot, However, he continued to dog me thereafter like a road Romeo.

Once, Rubi, my friend asked me to watch a movie running in a nearby Globe Theatre. She forced me to accompany her. Lastly, I got ready to watch the film with her. It was one of the most famous theatres in Florence. House Full board was still hanging at the entrance gate and all the black tickets were sold. Rubi said to me,

“Today the film is released. Therefore, there is hardly any chance to get the tickets. We’ll come another day to watch this movie.”



“Okay, as you wish,” I said to her.

We were about to leave the theatre, a boy who gave us a lift in his car encountered us again and said,

“I have two tickets; I have just received a call from my friend waiting for us at the airport to receive him.

We got to go right now at any cost and have already cancelled watching the film tonight. Could you please do me a favor by receiving these two tickets?”

Rubi got the tickets without much debate on that.

“Thank you very much,” Rubi said to him.

“You’re most welcome.” He responded and left went away.

I was totally baffled to notice the young boy again dogging me wherever I go. I was very disbelieving about his character. I didn’t understand why he was doing me a favor. Many questions mystified me to see his presence. When he got disappeared from there, I began to think more about him. Perhaps, his absence tortured me. Something in him was still fascinating me and dragging me towards him by an invisible force.

Ray handed over his tickets to Rubi and left the theatre in a jolly mood. We later entered the cinema hall at the balcony way, we were late by fifteen minutes. A boy wearing a cap helped us to get our seats in the dark hall. There were four seats vacant in our row at the corner. We occupied two seats and felt relaxed in an air-conditioned balcony. After an hour, two men came in and occupied vacant seats beside me. I was feeling uncomfortable to watch the film with the man who was deliberately touching me. He attempted to touch my hands and feet watching the film. Therefore, I asked Rubi to change the seats. She agreed and I could escape myself from the trouble.

“Do you have any problem sitting to my side?” Rubi asked me.

“Yes, I can’t see movie properly from here.” I replied.

I was incapable to concentrate on the film for a long time because I wanted to see the face of the man touching my hands and feet while watching the film. I was truly waiting for an interval break to behold him. Still I was struggling to imagine his face in utter darkness in the theatre. Rubi said nothing to me about

his touching hands and feet to her that amazed me a lot. I thought that he must be doing the same with her. I was simply looking at her hands and feet after every five minutes in the theatre. I thought that she might tell me about him at the interval break. However, she didn't!

At the interval break, Rubi turned her face to that man and began to talk to him in a friendly way.

“When did you get back here? I indeed didn't find you coming.” She said to him.

“Exactly after an hour.” He said.

“You said you were going to receive your friend at the airport and you returned so early.” Rubi asked him surprisingly.

“Yes, you are right,” he said,

“Actually we received our friend coming from America. However, he refused to accompany us because he was very exhausted by journey. He was taking rest at home. I had four tickets in total, I gave you two and the rest of the two are with us now.”

“It's okay, I got it.” Rubi said to him.

I wanted to see the face of the man who had been talking to her since long. Therefore, I turned around

and saw the same man who had given me a lift and then tickets free of cost. He was the same man who was vexing to touch my hands and feet while the film was screening. I had never thought that Ray, the same man would be a spoilt one and I isolated him utterly from my heart. I wanted to re-confirm that the man would not have mistaken with Rubi, my friend as he would fall in love with anyone anywhere anytime. That is why; Rubi said nothing about the disobedience of that young boy in the theatre. Ray dreamt fancies for Rubi and she too reacted confidently to him. The cherished relations again tortured me a lot. I could not feast my eyes on their love-relations. I was not in love with Ray, However still I could not succeed in convincing myself about my hating to him. I began to hate both Ray and Rubi. Still I did not know why? “What’s your name?” Rubi asked him.

“Ray,” he said with a curt smile.

“I think you are a college going boy, aren’t you?” She asked him.

“No,” he said,

“I have completed all my education. I’m a pilot by profession. So, I’m engaged with trainings right now under the supervision of my experts.”

“Oh, I see. Indeed I’m pleased to see you,” Rubi said.

“Me too,” he said, shaking hands a bit heavier.

Ray unnoticed me on purpose and gone astray himself in passionate staring at Rubi. I still remembered his blue eyeballs thirstily drinking me through the corner of his eyes. I must have suspected their love affair, However silenced her in that matter. I would have suspected love affair he had had, but a cruel time anyhow silenced me in that matter.

“Could you please have a coffee with us?” Ray asked Rubi.

It was quite habitual to Rubi to behave freely in Florence; However I had to unwillingly accompany her to have coffee with them.

At last, Rubi introduced me to Ray,

“This is my best friend, Rose.”

“Nice to meet you,” he said to me.

“Hello,” I said.

He presented himself for a heavy handshake and I did so without losing my confidence, as the bizarre situation seemed to be quite unfriendly to me.

After a few days, Ray used to park his car in front of my room, knock at the door and say,

“Rose, it’s me, your gallant Ray. Open the door.”

I never opened my door for him. However one day, I opened my door and scolded him the way I could, “Why do you tease me every day? Tell me what exactly you want.”

“I love you,” he said.

“Are you crazy?” I said to him.

“Yes, I am,” he said,

“Truly I love you, Rose and I want to marry you.”

“However, I don’t. For God’s sake, you first get lost from here.” I shouted at him like anything.

He left saying,

“I indeed love you, Rose. You believe me or not. I know you love me too. ”

“No... never,” I cried in despair.

I am indeed fed up with his routine harassment. Next day, I went to the police station early in the morning to lodge a complaint against him. However, there was no police officer who had taken me seriously.

“Did he do anything with you?” A police officer asked me.

“Are you waiting for him to do something wrong with me?” I cried.

“Oh, Mam, answer my questions politely.” He said.

“No,” I said.

“What do you mean by No?” He asked me.

“I mean he didn’t do anything with me,. However, he has been teasing and dogging behind me since long.”

I sighed in pain.

“Can you show that dogged companion?” He asked me.

“Yes, I can if you come to my room and wait for him at the door in your civil dress.”

“Oh, Mam, do not teach me what I am supposed to do. I know my duty and its priority. I have a number of problems to resolve here. Yours is nothing for me. All the police officers are appointed to execute their duties. I am directed to attend “Politicians’ Meet Ceremony tomorrow without fail.” He said,

“Please, do not waste my time. Go home; lock the door of your room neatly from inside before you go to bed.”

Later on, I dared to enter the cabin of higher authority and lodged a complaint against the police officer.

The officer was quite serious; he immediately called

the police officer in his cabin and scolded him in an irritating voice.

“First of all, you take her complaint into consideration. You then go to her room and find out the road Romeo harassing her for a long time. Listen, put on your regular civic dress so that nobody can suspect you as a police officer. Get that scoundrel by hook or crook.”

“Yes, sir,” he said,

“However, Sir, What’s about the “Politicians Meet Ceremony” tomorrow.”

“Just do what I say. No more questions.” The officer said.

“Yes, sir.” He said.

I then gave my complete address to that police officer and left the police station in great relief.

However, the man who was troubling me didn’t turn up for a couple of days.

A police officer said to me,

“Madam, you are indeed wasting our time. Nobody comes and goes here. You might have dreamt something horrifying.”

“Just wait for one more day,” I requested him.

Next day, Ray came to my door and knocked the door as usual.



“How are you, Rose? He said.

Hardly had I opened the door of my room, the police officer caught him to his collar and forcibly dragged him towards a police jeep.

“You don’t know who I am.” Ray said.

“Even you don’t know me.” The police officer cried.

I went along with the police officer and the irate man to the police station. It was crowded, tensed like a hell as usual. The officer who considered my complaint accosted me by chance.

“Ray, it’s you.” The officer said.

“Yes, sir. It’s me who loves this woman-called-Rose very much and wants to marry her. Even the court gives permission to our wedding.” Ray said.

“However, the way you propose her is mistaken. She is not ready to love and marry you. Why are you disquieting her like this? Look, this is a crime to tease anyone as you do. Everybody has his own rights to lead life at liberty in a democratic country. If she loves you as you love her, the matter would be different.” The officer said to Ray.

“Sir, I didn’t do anything. This police officer caught and dragged me here like a criminal.” Ray said.

“Let him go first,” the officer said to the police officer,  
“His father is my best friend.”

“Sir, how can you free him like this?” I asked the officer.

“What’s your name?” He asked me.

“Rose,” I said calmly.

“Listen, Rose. First you tell me what crime he has done.” He said to me.

I remained silent, simply looking at the fact how rich people escape after doing crime. I was unemotionally observing changing roles of police officer. All of a sudden, I left the police station after withdrawing my case.

Thereafter, Ray followed me like a dog. I couldn’t understand whether it was his madness, true love or lust for me. He tried his level best to get me by hook or crook. Perhaps he might have adhered to the notion *‘everything is fair in love and war.’* Ray was gallant, arrogant, and crazy for me. In fact, he doesn’t know how to propose a woman for love and then wedding. He troubled me a lot in my office, room and even in public on the road. And there was nobody to help me

out of that. I once told it to Ruhi, my friend. However, she unheeded me.

One day I went to the Art Exhibition in Florence. I was very interested in art and painting. I happened to come across a beautiful painting entitled “Rubi”. It was a painting of Rubi seating deserted, pining for her lost love. Tears were rolling down her cheeks. The dark room was a symbolic manifestation of suffocation or asphyxiation of a woman, whose socio-political status was undefined. She seemed to be on the horns of dilemma to escape herself from the maddening crowd of people surrounding her as she was trapped in. She has been suffering from xenophobia since her birth. The painting showed a woman trapped in the labyrinth and demanding to escape from man-made disasters. She is looking for a light of love. It was a speaking picture resembling my life. A woman shading tears in the dark room needs love and her rights to live in life better.

“Is it on sale?” I asked a seller.

“Yes, it is.” He said.

“How much does it cost?” I asked him.

“Only ninety thousand rupees,” he said.

I had only three thousand rupees with me, However, I, in reality, liked that painting very much. It was the best painting in the exhibition costing for the highest price.

“Do you want to go for this painting?” A seller asked me.

“I’m sorry, I can’t.” I said when I was coming out of the exhibition hall in a gloomy mood.

I was walking along the way to my room. Meanwhile a man accosted and informed me, “Excuse me, madam, a seller is calling you.”

I thought he must have called me for the negotiation of the price.

“No, I don’t want that painting,” I said to him clearly.

“Madam, you decide what to do. I was supposed to deliver his message to you only. Nothing else.” He left.

As I liked the painting very much, my pleasing steps mechanically moved towards the exhibition hall to see the reason for which he called me. I was thinking I must have misread the price. It might be nine thousand rupees.

I said to myself,

“I have three thousand rupees with me and I will take that after negotiations. I will convince him to sell me the painting before it is sold to somebody else.”

I entered the exhibition hall and first checked the price. The price was ninety thousand rupees. I remained silent and retreated slowly.

A seller asked me,

“Madam, I called you,”

“Oh, yes, why did you call me?” I asked him in a little louder tone.

“Are you going to give me this painting for three thousand rupees?”

“No, madam, the prices of all the paintings hanging on the wall are fixed. We never negotiate in the prices of paintings.” He said.

“Tell me, then, why did you call me here.” I again asked him.

“Just wait for a while,” he said while he was packing the painting in the envelope.

“I don’t want this painting because I don’t have that amount. It’s unaffordable to me, sir.” I said.

“Listen to me, madam.” He said.

“Sorry, I don’t.” I said turning around to set out of the hall.

“Madam, it’s free of cost for you,” he said.

“Are you kidding me?” I furiously turned around.

“Indeed, madam,” he said.

It was a golden chance for me to get the painting I liked most with free of cost.

“I am confused. Why are giving it to me free of cost?”

I asked him.

“I have just received a call from the painter who told me to give you this painting free of cost.” He said.

“Who is the painter?” I asked him.

“Ray,” he said.

I recollected the name Ray instantly that had been following me since long. I used to tear off his love letters and throw at the dustbin many times. Moreover, he told me that he was a pilot by profession. Then I thought a painter must be a different man. I could not resist myself taking the painting free of cost. A seller packed the painting properly and handed over to me. I was very pleased to get that. I didn’t ask him any questions although many questions were baffling me. I later came to my room and opened the painting.

“How beautiful!” I explained.

Again, I read a caption inscribed there.

*“A struggler in life always treads a path of fire.”*

At the corner of the painting, a signature was put on artistically along with the name, Ray.

I kissed the painting repeatedly and hung it on the wall permanently depicting a story of my life entirely. I certainly fell in love with the painter who portrayed my whole life in his painting.

I went to bed looking at the painting that had deeply touched me inward.

Next day, I received an unknown call. He said,  
“Did you like my painting?”

“Yes, very much,” I said.

“I’m very thankful to you as you offered me a nice gift. What’s your name?” I asked him.

“Ray,” He said.

However, the voice seemed to be at ease with me. His voice resembled Ray who was in love me and me too. However, the mobile number was different. I overlooked all and thanked him once again.

Ray used to write love letters to me. However, he didn’t turn up later. Many months left. In fact, I

missed him a lot. Aall of a sudden considering that even he had once been my secret admirer.

One day, he returned unexpectedly and accosted me in the garden. I was alone as usual. Children were playing on the ground and old people were busy at gossiping seated in a circle.

Some loving couples were having snacks or some refreshments there.

“Hi, Rose,” He said.

I noticed him coming close to me. However, I acted as if I didn’t see him. Old people were looking at me, perhaps I was a married woman of thirty-five years old, and he was quite young, just around twenty-six years old.

“Hi,” I said.

“Did you like my painting?” He asked me in public.

I heard the same voice on the phone in the morning.

“Is it you?” I asked him startlingly.

“Yes,” he said,d

“Last time I told you that I was a painter. However, I am a painter too.”

“I don’t believe that you are a painter too,” I said.

“Anyone can be a painter, just he should be a gifted



one,” he proudly said.

“Indeed, I don’t trust you anymore,” I said.

“Is it because I bothered you more or I wrote love letters to you and publicly humiliated you?”

He asked to me.

“None of these you said.” I replied.

“Then what?” He asked me expecting something from me in turn.

“Because you are not serious towards the life you lead I think,” I said.

“Of course, I am.” He answered quickly.

And continued thereafter,

“You know I was born and brought up in a very rich family. Moreover, there was hardly any to restrict what I had said and how I had behaved. I had been free to do anything I liked.”

“That’s the reason you used to flirt me,” I said.

“Please do not misjudge me.” He humbly requested.

“Come home and meet my parents. They are not prudish like me. They will talk to you generously because they truly love my friends and me too. You might not know that I am the only son in the family.”

“Okay, I will think about it,” I said.

“And you can see my other paintings.” He said.

“Oh, sure,” I said.

The experience I had there was quite funny, unusual and strange. It was a novel experience to me than the experiences I had had before. However, his painting mesmerized me hugely and Ray himself. There was something in him that drove me irrational about him. I never abided rushed changes in my life. However, my cruel destiny had forced me to adapt them as per circumstances.

Again, he asked me,

“Do you love me or not?”

“Are you stupid?” I asked him.

“Only for you,” he said.

“I love you very much as love is not defined the way it has to be and I want to marry you soon,” he insisted.

I stayed silent.

He asked me again, “Will you please marry me?”

“Look, what do you know about me and the life I led before? I asked him.

“Nothing,” he said, “Even I don’t want to know about it.”

“I think you are instinctively in love with me. Today,

I can eyewitness how love is defined as blind and deaf.”

“I honestly love you, Rose,” he said in a desperate tone,

“Whatever you think about me I would like to marry you by all means,” he said.

“What can you do for me?” I asked him reading through the ridiculousness of love.

“I cannot die like other lovers do because I love you very much.” He said.

“Go on, tell me first.” I insisted.

“I can quit my most caring family and be with you always.” He said.

“Do you want to leave your dear parents?” I asked him.

“For you I can do anything, Rose.” He said.

“Please come here and sit beside me,” I said thinking about his unbalanced walk.

He came and sat beside me feeling as if he conquered half of the battle.

“Ray, look, I’m from a very poor family.” I said.

“Then, I will make you rich.” He said instantly.

“How old are you?” I asked him.

He said, “I’m twenty six years old.”

“You know girls hesitate to tell their age as boys’ do for salary.” I said.

“And it is immoral to ask them like this.” He said.

“Can you guess how old I am?” I asked him.

“Perhaps twenty-three or twenty-four, not more than that I think,” he said,

“However, age makes no difference to me.”

“I love you. And I would get married to you at the soonest.”

“Okay, I tell you. I am thirty-five years old.” I said.

“No Problem,” he said.

“Yes, no problem to you, however, there must be a very big problem to your family, Ray.” I said a little loudly.

“I’ll ask my parents and do convince them. And I’m sure that they never say ‘no’ to me.” He said.

“Listen to me carefully,” I said,

“I’m a married woman. And my husband is still alive.”

“Then, I’ll kill your husband and marry you,” he said and laughed loudly.

“What did you say?” I asked him.

“Sorry, where is your husband?” I he asked him, me.

“And what is he?”

“Ray, I do not live with him.” I said.

“Then, you are not a widow.” He said.

“No, I’m a widow of a living husband.” I said.

“Have you taken divorce from him?” He asked me.

“No,” I said.

“Do you want to take a divorce from him?” He asked me again.

“I sent him a notification of divorce a week ago. The court will decide the rest,” I said.

“Ray, I do not want to indulge myself into love and wedding. My past memories torment me all the time. My husband is deceased for me.” I said.

Ray became quite serious. I found him throwing stones in the pond nearby in an unsure mood.

“What’s your future plan then?” He asked me.

“Nothing else, just live life as it comes to me. Ultimately, I have not yet thought over it.” I said.

“Rose, you are a married woman about thirty-five years old. I still love you and want you as a wife,” he said,

“You please think about me earnestly, make a decision

as early as possible, and do tell me tomorrow. You do not forget the fact that I have been waiting for your positive reply since long.”

Meanwhile, a friend of Ray called him.

“Ray, come fast, we are getting late for tonight’s birthday party.”

“Oh, yes.” He replied,

“Tomorrow, I will be waiting for your reply, Rose.”

At that night, I could not even doze a bit. I thought about Ray deeply whom I love very much. However, the bitter experiences of wedding, and ruthless society opposed me constantly to do so. Ray was straightforward, immature and kind-hearted. His transparent nature impressed me a lot. He never criticized a man at his back. In fact, he talks to a man on his face. However, I was feeling ashamed to say that I love him very much and even I wanted to marry him. At dawn, I decided to see his paintings.

Next day, I didn’t get any call from him. I was just waiting for his call for hours together. Then, I typed an SMS for him as follows:

“Why didn’t you call me?” I typed.

“I’m waiting for your call.” He replied.

“Are you not taking me home?” I again typed.

“You mean you are ready.” He replied elatedly.

“First, I want to see your paintings and I will meet your parents later.” I replied.

“Just wait for a while, I’ll catch you soon. It takes twenty minutes to reach your room.” He said.

“Do you know my address?” I asked him.

“Yes, of course,” he replied.

“Then I will get ready till you get back to me.” I typed.

“Okay, here I come. I love you, Rose.” He replied.

“Me too, Ray.” I typed.

I put on a blue jeans and white shirt on it. It was a dress offered to me as a gift by Ruhi, my childhood friend. I did not know why I refused to opt for wearing a sari on the day. It was the first time I looked very stylish, liberal and rich in the mirror. I kept my hair loosened pinning all together at my back as a pony. I usually tie my oily hair tightly folding them all around in a circle in a traditional hairstyle.

Within next fifteen minutes, Ray reached the room.

“Rose, are you ready?” He asked me.

“Yes, here I am.” I replied.

He came to receive me in his car.

He said,

“Get in the car, Rose.”

“Yes,” I said.

I was just opening a backside door of a car. He said.

“Rose, you will be the owner of a car if you sit like this,” Ray said,

“Are you relaxed there?”

“Yes, I am,” I said.

“You do not know why I call you here. People may fault me as a driver and you as an owner. You are undoubtedly an owner right now.” He said.

“Yes, you are a driver.” I said to him.

“Jokes apart, I indeed wanted you to seat beside me to talk to you.” He said.

“Do not talk as you drive,” I said,

“Have you disremembered the basic rules of driving?”

“Yes, I will learn from you any howany how.” He said.

Ray came to me and held my hand lovingly and said,

“Please come and seat here with me.” He requested.

I couldn't say no to him and sat beside him finally.

When the car was speedily going, he asked me,

“Rose, would you like to see my paintings or parents



first?” He asked me.

“Paintings,” I said.

“Okay, let’s go.” He said.

He took me to his bungalow, a big palace. He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He showed me all his paintings that were indeed very appreciative and artistic. I congratulated him for his fine art. Then I moved on to see his parents along with him.

“Dad, this is Rose whom I love very much and want to marry her.” He said.

“How dare you to make your own decisions like this?”

His dad shouted, “Are you stupid?”

“Yes, I’m. I told everything about Rose last night. Just give me your blessings.” Ray said.

“You disrepute me, Ray,” he said,

“Have you gone mad?”

“I tell you something solemn now. If you marry the old widow, I’ll donate all my property to schools and colleges or to your cousin.” He said.

“She belongs to a lower caste having no family link or richness, no cultured background with a social dignity as we do have.”

He said.

“Yes, dad. I know all.” Ray said.

“Both of you first get lost from my home and never show me your face.” He said.

“Thank you, dad.” Ray said.

Ray gave a bunch of keys to his father. We lastly came out of home carrying his paintings in the hand. I didn't know the fact that I had already informed his parents about our affair.

At the gate Ray said, “Are you with me?”

“Rose, I left my parents and property forever for you. I do not say things in the air. , However, I do it. You have witnessed all what happened inside.”

“Yes, Ray.” I said.

He smiled and hugged me. I was indeed surprised how he felt my inner self.

He said,

“You call your friend, Ryan to the office of Registered Wedding and I'm going to call a few friends there. We are getting married, Rose.”

I hugged Ray for the man I dreamt. His courage and unconditional love for me truly maddened me. Then, I called Ryan, a friend working at the Registered

Wedding office. I told him what happened in brief. We put our signatures on the register and garland each other binding us permanently as a so-called newly wedded husband and wife. We had a grand party that night organized by his friends. All congratulated both of us and gave compliments for our bright future. Those were the compliments to a suffered woman who had been confined within four walls in a dark room. It was a new birth to a dead woman as if the destiny did a great favor upon me again. It was a beginning to new challenges and ordeals and a big full stop to the sufferings I had had earlier.

“Here is a dead body.” A man shouted.

All my sweet memories of Ray shattered once again. I pushed myself a bit onwards from my reclined backbone on the tree and resumed my directionless journey. Opening my eyes, I found a huge crowd of people all around a dead body. I happened to see a woman in a black *sari* crying loudly along with shocking faces of children hugged to her legs. She was hopelessly asking for a return of her dead husband, yearning for her unfulfilled dreams, promises and

hopes made before his departure. She was sharing to all her anxieties with the crowd in his absence and hopes of survival.

“Is the life of a woman a sin?” I was questioning myself. I was rotating just like a pendulum moving from death to life and life to death in a stereotypical chained wheel of time.

There is a no sign to get Ray to me amidst the crowd of dead bodies. According to the official announcement made on the television, Ray is dead and therefore, there was no hope left for his life. Unfortunately, I have lost him forever. The officer at the graveyard announced to *all the relatives that the pilot in the air crash died on the spot along with all crews travelling in the plane.*

There was no sign of his survival; all searches were in vain. I went astray to regain my lost confidence and kneeled down painfully on the ground. All of a sudden, I accosted a worried woman with a baby crying loudly for the death of her husband. I gathered my courage to console and calm her down.

“What happened with you?” She later asked me.

“My husband who was a pilot is declared to be dead in the air crash.” I told her.

“Have you got his body?” She asked me.

“No, in fact, I’m looking for it.” I said.

“Look, all the bodies have not yet been found. Most of them are burnt completely and therefore it would be quite difficult to recognize the faces.” She informed me.

“Are you sure that a pilot is dead?” I asked her.

“I heard that almost all died in the air crash in the BBC news and the BBC has never been wrong. I even read in the *Times of London* and watched a deadly scene on Aaj Tak, a Hindi news channel by a reporter.” She said.

“Both of us are losers,” I convinced her, “You have at least had a dead body of your husband.”

“Yes, you are right. I got a faceless burnt body.” She cried in pain.

Holding her weightless body, I supported her and asked her after some time,

“Why is the plane crashed?”

“There was a machinery fault, you know. Before taking flight, it was a very minor fault, so workers

ignored it, However, the minor fault became a major one in the air where there is nobody to help them out.” She cried loudly.

“Why don’t engineers look into the matter carefully before a plane takes off?” I asked her.

“Sometimes it happens. You must have heard about air crashes and their reasons of crash. Weather conditions and machinery faults are mostly the root causes of air crash.” She said.

My tears had dried up. Then I asked her again,

“Why couldn’t they use parachutes to save their lives?”

“Madam, there is a meaningless use of parachutes on the land because the plane got fired when it was being landed.” She said, “Excuse me.”

“It’s okay.” I said.

Later on, she left carrying a dead body for cremation.

“A very few bodies were hospitalized.” A passerby remarked.

“Where have the bodies been hospitalized?” I asked him.

“They are admitted in ICU at Sanjeevani Hospital.” He said.

“Can you please give me the address?” I asked him.  
“It’s placed in front of the old gate of a graveyard.  
Ask anybody at the gate, you’ll get it as you expect.  
Look, it faces south.” He said.

I thanked him and left for the hospital. Almost all the dead bodies hospitalized seemed to have been paralyzed, almost dead in ICU except a single one. My hopes once again rose up.

“Can I see the patient?” I asked the doctor.

“No,” the doctor said, “Are you his relative?”

“No,” I said.

“Then for what reason are you meeting him right now?” He asked me.

“My husband is said to be dead officially, but still my heart does not permit me to believe in what they’ve said. Just I want to confirm it.” I pleaded.

“Look, his wife is seating sitting beside the body.” He said so and left me.

Despite all red-eyed warnings, I finally dared to peep inside the ICU room and could look at his face. Yes, it was not Ray. “Oh, God!” I exclaimed.

Another body was much burnt; however, the face seemed to be unsafe. The body was alive to

lead a dead life ahead. I was upset within and felt disappointed about the absurdity of life and cruel times hovering over my head like a sword to slash me brutally anytime, anywhere, and anyhow. My heavy steps were steadily moving towards the graveyard researching for my love lost forever.

All of a sudden, I encountered a huge crowd of people rushing through a door inside the graveyard to identify and locate the dead bodies for cremation or burial and I found kneeled down men and women crying for a big loss of loved ones.

Dogs were barking loudly and crying in tune heading towards the red sun. They cried as if they lost their dear ones. The cry was monotonous, a sign of bad omen and a perpetual reminder of vanished God who forgot to restore human beings from their stuck cycles and redeem them from the incessant cycle of births and deaths forever.

My trodden steps were heavy, unbalanced and lifeless in pain and feet swollen, dared to tread on a heated land over-scorch in the sun. Motor cars, bikes, and ambulance vans were disorderly parked at the gate



and the entry of people rushing over as a frenzied tide in the ocean was strictly prohibited for a specific reason.

At the entrance of the main gate, I encountered little girls carrying pots, filled with water, on their heads. As it is a good omen, I hurriedly felt my purse, brought out a coin, and put it inside the pot praying for the survival of Ray as a miracle. The event made me optimistic as it could bring back a wide smile on my face.

“Shall I be an exception for that?” I thought about it for a while.

A gravedigger was busy at his work. Almost all the faces of the dead bodies were covered and wrapped in a plastic coating tightly. No dead body was detectable to us except a number hanged up in a circle for recognition of dead bodies. It was not stinking at all.

“Can I see the face?” I asked a gravedigger.

He said, “All are faceless bodies? Already burnt in explosion, you see.

I asked him, “What is his name?”

“Don’t ask me stupid questions. Let me do my work.”

He angrily said.

“Please you keep yourself aside and let us do our duties. We have many bodies to burn and bury here. You do one thing. You go to the office nearby and check the list carefully,” he shouted.

I closed my eyes and brought back a smiling face of Ray in my baffled mind. He was telling me something, However, I didn't get it. I didn't know perhaps he was telling me that my husband was alive.

“How can he be alive?” I said to myself.

There I saw a child crying and all of sudden I thought of my child, Riya, whom I forgot to give medication and she might be thirsty too. She is lonely and helpless at home.

“How cruel am I?” I whispered.

I gave up finding out the dead and rushed to the living at home.

## II

### AIR CRASH NEWS OF PLANE CRASH

“Take care, Rose,” Ray said. Tears rolling down the cheeks of his eyes as he was leaving for Maldives for the first time as a pilot with silent words...see you soon, bye...bye...

Ray met officers at the airport.

“Sir, I’m Ray. I have completed a pilot training course as per the schedule given to me. I am informed to drive the plane from Pisa to tonight. Here is my identity card and credential for your perusal and confirmation.” Ray said to officers at the airport.

“Sure,” he said,

“The plane got a few machinery problems. So engineers are busy at looking into the problem. That is a minor problem, I think, and that will be all right shortly. You just do one think - have supper and get ready in a uniform by the time the plane gets a complete recovery. Is it all clear?” The officer ordered him.

“Yes, sir!.” Ray said.

Ray was still thinking about Rose as her story touched him deeply. Something in her story might have created a great impact upon him. He reminded an event with Rose after wedding.

Ray closed his eyes and visualized an event in the past reclining his back on the seat.

It was a late midnight. Rose was waiting for me on the first floor porch gallery. Even I was very late to reach home than my usual timings because of some office work pending. I didn't call her since I had been very busy with the work. To please her, I bought a *sari* for her costing near about Rs. 2000 and entered the house like a thief through the back door.

"Rose, it's me." I said.

She didn't pay her attention to me. She was still waiting for me on the porch. She opened the door and called me in. She said nothing. There was no anger and affection on her face.

"Your dinner is ready before you go to bed." She said and entered the kitchen room.

I said, "I had it in the office.

Did you take your dinner?" I asked her.

She said, "No."

“Why?” I asked her.

“A wife cannot have food before her husband.” She said.

“Who told you this?” I asked.

“By so-called male-dominated society.” She said.

“Rose, please you naturally have your food in my absence too.also. Do not wait for me like this. Just see, I had my dinner when I was hungry. You do the same. Ours is a modern society.” I said.

“Our ideas should be modern first. I do not know how you react with this habitual situation at home. I just did what other women did. So I didn’t.” Rose said.

“Rose, do you know *sati*, where a wife is burnt alive thrown unwillingly on the pyre of her husband,” I said.

“I know it well”, she answered silently and continues, “It is a social evil resided deeply into the minds of people who always discriminate woman from man as she is weak. Even today also, people in some remote places in rural hilly areas still get stuck to this unchanged social evil, customs and traditions. This is perhaps a culture of uncultured citizens of London.”

“Rose, I do agree with you. We have to first uproot

such social evils from the minds of people who indeed do not know that woman is a great contribution to the progress of the nation at large if the attitudes toward women are radically changed by men. This is a crucial time to modernize ourselves coping ourselves with the western progression of gender equality while retaining our cultural heritage. However, whenever I look at the present situation regarding all social evils exploiting women in London, I lose my temper. Indeed we have not yet recovered from our mental sickness and poverty,” I said, “Gang rape in Delhi, dowry deaths, bride burning, mental torture still create storm in London. The system fails to control all frequent happenings in London.”

“What system are you talking about, Ray?” Rose asked.

“The law and order in our nation,” I said, “Evil doers should be put behind the bars and punished so that nobody dares to perpetuate crimes in London.”

“Why don’t people abide by law and order in London?” Rose said,

“Why do they think of their superiority in breaking

rules by power?

“Yes, rules are made for human benefit and safety life of every individual. People neglect them all. Implementations seem to be weaker because of power. One who pays more money turns out to be an innocent criminal and one who has no money suffers for the crime he has not done in reality.” I said,

“Our nation will progress only when the law and order are strictly followed without being a victim to recommendations and ongoing corruption.”

“I agree with you, Ray.” Rose said changing the topic, “Tell me why a woman suffers in her life.”

“Woman suffers because of her own faults. She blindly believes what she is told and silently drinks drops of her unending sufferings saying nothing to men around her. Look, she should be brave, aggressive and fight against all social evils within and without deeply rooted into the society. She has to come up with her own ideas breaking chains of male-domination and her perpetual confinement in a dark room. A woman must not be sitting in a dark room However kindle the world with love and progress.” I said.

“Ray, don’t you think man is responsible for woman’s

sufferings at large from her birth till death?” Rose asked.

“Yes, you are right However not the feminist man like me; who always supports and encourages you in hardships.” I said.

“That is true, my darling.” Rose said.

I waited till she finished her dinner. After food, she pulled me towards her and kissed me. I put my hands on her tender waist and said,

“I love you, Rose.”

“Me too.” She said.

I always tried to lower her hidden grief as I found her absent-minded and lost in thoughts.

“I have a gift for you, Rose.” I said.

“For what?” She asked me.

“After our wedding, I didn’t give you anything,” I said,

“Just go for three guesses you think.”

“Bangles, hair-pin or purse.” She said.

“None of them all you said.” I spoke out.

“Please tell me what it could be.” I said to her.

“I indeed do not know, Ray,” She said.



I knelt down by her and offered her a gift sealed.

“How much does it cost?” She asked.

“Rs. 2000 /- only,” I said.

“Why did you spend so much money? She said.

“You know everything very well that we do not have enough money to run the family. Again we are planning for a child now.”

She opened a seal and said,

“It’s very expensive, Ray. Have you gone mad?”

“This is my first gift to you after our wedding.” I said.

“That’s okay. I have many saris like this.” Rose said.

In fact, she had only two saris and a dress given by Ruhi.

I said,

“I spent money and bought a gift for you thinking that you will be pleased to see this. And you are scolding me.”

Having been disappointed, I left the room keeping the sari on the table and I went upstairs.

It was a starry night. All the stars got together and were shedding glittering light to the world. A few stars were absorbed into playing a game of hide and seek and the moon became a judge in the game. Dark clouds

were keeping losers of the game behind themselves whereas winners resting near the moon and smiling at others defeat. Seven friendly stars seemed unmoved were still twinkling in the sky in a designed pattern. And some random stars were shooting the light of fire on the earth while falling down from the skies that had imprisoned them. No star dared to be grounded and therefore preferred disappearing into sky slowly. The moon felt like being lonely refusing all other stars to stay beside her. Perhaps she was to witness the cluster of stars and thus kept one and all aside from her. The moon was keeping a safe distance from obstinate stars that were struggling to touch her. Her hatred made all stars twinkle and giggle in revolt against her. The clouds were in guise of strange faces unknown to me and all. Some dark clouds were predicting rain on barren land and busy at fetching water on the earth. All were marching hastily onwards, rushing through many dense clouds and making ways out of lost path following orders of the God of rain. Bright radiance of stars was making soft eyes of the moon glitter and therefore she was closing her eyes at their sight. Long hands of clouds were separating stars aside and

rushing onwards to get the work done at the earliest. Breeze was blowing at a snail's pace touching and making the heart chill and inviting.

At that night, she wore a sari and came in front of me. She was looking gorgeous. Her dazzling beauty was inexplicable without wearing any ornaments. She is fair, and has a same height as I have. Her silky hair was fallen up to her waist, looking slim with a cute face.

"I'm sorry, Ray. I have indeed disheartened you. I should have not said so to you. However you can understand why I said so." Rose said,

"Please do not buy expensive things for me hereafter. You need not buy for yourself as well until we get settled. We must save money now. I know you belong to a very rich family and Rs. 2000/- is nothing for you. In addition to this, we have property left behind. We suffer economically every day. And money means a lot to both of us."

"I'm extremely sorry, Rose. I will be very careful about spending money hereafter. I will save money as I can." I responded her agreeing the mistake I committed.

“Look, Ray, once we get settled and earn enough money, I will never say no to you. In fact I will ask you for buying new things for our family like refrigerator, television and laptop...etc.” She said it touching my cheeks.

She then kissed me.

“Stop it, please.” I said.

However still, she didn't stop kissing me. Perhaps she might have liked my gift.

“I need to get fresh first,” I said.

“I'm in a mood now. Please come fast.” She said.

I still remember,

“It was a starry summer night. We were sleeping on the top of the building. The sky was glittering shading drops of silent light upon us. The night mesmerized us of both with her twinkling stars in our eyes. The wind was exciting and a bit biting with warming cold. It was something like entire world's ecstasy has fallen upon us in a dim moonlight. That honey night still bites me over and again.”

“Ray, is everything ready now. Are you okay?”

The officer at airport shouted and my memories wind up into the heart with my duty interruption.

“I’m just waiting for your call, sir. Everything is okay now. I’m coming in a moment.”

I said to the officer and entered in his cabin thinking about Rose who might have reached home by then.

Bidding a farewell to my husband with heavy steps I walked off the airport. I didn’t know something was missing there. Nothing seemed meaningful to me then; life looked so gloomy and dark, I murmured, perhaps his absence was felt strongly to cope with the surroundings encircled me. Oh...moving trees stood still and the light in a day hid behind clouds and silent winds were hinting at me something serious. Black crows were crying kau...kau...kau...all of a sudden over my head shedding tears of lost love in the air.

I asked a stranger,

“What time is it now?”

“12 at noon,” a passerby said.

I felt something evil was going to happen with me as all bad omens had been dogging me since long.

I ignored all what was going to scare me and reached home lonely waiting for a call from my husband. Hours left, no call I received...may be my husband was busy at work. I tried his mobile many times and

found that his mobile was out of reach. I was worried, I heard the groaning, “Mamma, I want a glass of water.” I regained my consciousness and rushed to Riya lying helplessly in the bed as she was born paralyzed, the only daughter we had.

I said, “Riya, how are you now?”

‘Fine, Mamma’, she said.

“Mamma, did you get your salary?” She asked me.

“Not yet, Riya, I do not know what’s wrong with me. All teachers are worried because no salary has been deposited in the bank for the last six months. However you do not worry; I’ll manage anyhow and hospitalize you at the earliest.” I assured her.

“Mamma, why you look so stressed, my dad will bring lots of money and all our problems will be solved soon. You know he promised me to hospitalize me in America for the treatment of paralyses I have been suffering since long.” Riya said.

Every moment I felt like carrying a huge stone on my head. I was stressed However with whom I needed to talk to and shared my despair. I used to tell her that when he returned, we would live in a bungalow and travelled around by a car. I used to talk about

all luxurious life to lead in future. Riya soon went to sleep and dim light of the candle kindled in me and out and I felt physically and mentally exhausted to relax on the bed.

Just to close the door I stood at the door there. A neighbor shouted and said, “Air Crash...” “What?” I said.

“Yes, air crash, you can watch it on the television,” she screamed.

The news terrified me and my entire senses reeled like a wheel of time in me. I knelt down and prayed for his safety.

A neighbor said, “Come on, I will show you all.”

I regained my consciousness anyhow and picked up falling courage and went straight to her door to see what the matter was.

“Oh God, he is no more,” I screamed,

“How God can be so ruthless and unfair to me?”

I felt unconscious for the whole night and was thinking of committing suicide that night.

I talked to myself, “However what’s about Riya, how will she survive without me?”

During that horrible night I couldn’t let my eyelash

fall down.

At midnight, Riya said,

“You are still awake, Mamma. What’s wrong with you? Why don’t you rest as you worked for the full day?”

“Oh, yes...I’ll do,” a sobbing voice sprang out from me.

“Are you crying, mamma?” She said.

“No, I just thought about something evil.

Nothing else,” I said.

The sun rays didn’t dare to enter my house; perhaps the darkness in me and my house was so thick and cruel.

Riya asked, “Are you not going to school today?”

“School...I forgot,” I said.

“Then, why are you not getting ready for it?” She asked me again.

“Riya, I am not feeling well and therefore I need to have some rest.” I said.

And then continued, “You tell me why God is so cruel.”

“No, mamma, you are absolutely wrong in your conception.” Riya said,



“God is not cruel. He sees our patience in life. He just puts forth many ordeals to pass and bestows upon us unending sufferings.”

“Yes, you’re right.” I agreed.

I was controlling my grief, still philosophy was peeping out of me in a discontented tone. In the morning as I was leaving for school, I knew some dead bodies of the air crash were found and all were being brought back to London for cremation.

A neighbor shouted,

“The plane got crashed when it was landing, a big fire...a big explosion...

Almost all died on the spot, you know.”

I found Riya thinking of the world outside. Slowly she closed her eyes and seeped into imagination. Something was lingering her mind.

Riya might be thinking about,

“The dust-kissing drops of rain pouring from the dark sky were busy at encircling tiny holes into the heated land and spreading perfume of wet land all around. And the dust was bursting into tiny particles and dancing in the air pleasantly at the approach of rain. A red tooth of bleeding lightening was roaring like a

tiger behind dark clouds of rain and the rain-loaded clouds were pushing other clouds and marching silently onwards. All of them were lost in playing a childish game of hide and seek. The wind was blowing cold air through lungs of tired mind. And children were collecting hailstones into pockets and singing songs of rain. The land seemed to be satisfied with the pouring of rain upon her and was smiling at me. A few rain drops were still dripping through the pipes hung high at the roof. Trees shed drops of rain resting on their backs on to the ground steadily. The retiring sun rays were feeling cold touch of air, enlightening the particles and kissing them tenderly. People were opening the doors heated air packed inside and moving out of their rooms to feel the breeze of trees inviting me and all.”

### III

#### AT THE AIRPORT

“I’m getting late to the airport now. You know I am ordered to resume my work as fly to as a pilot for the first time. It takes only one hour forty-five minutes to reach Male, the capital city of Maldives. Having had enough training course in London as a pilot, I am still a little bit scared to enter into the new profession. Rose, I am going to call you as soon as I get there. Don’t worry about me. Take care of Riya and yourself,” Ray said to me,

“Rose, are you coming with me to the airport?”

“Just wait for a while, I am getting ready.” I replied.

“Rose, have you given medication to Riya?” Ray asked.

“Yes, I did. She will not get up by the time I reach home.” I said.

Both reached airport in time. The airport was crowded as usual; passengers were in a queue to get their luggage checked. A woman was quarrelling with the officers of custom duty to carry her excess

luggage without fine to be paid in dollars that was, of course, more than twenty kilogram excluding her seven kilogram luggage secretly carrying in her hand as a hand bag. She had almost asked all the customers in a queue to adjust her luggage with their luggage. She seemed to be a quarrelling woman with a baby playing around. And a man wearing a red cap was caught by officers for carrying a gym appliance with him for his physical exercise. He was asking for the permission to carry the same with him.

“Rose, the plane is delayed due to heavy rain. And anew schedule of plane departure has already been displayed on the screen. I need to talk to the officers first and get back to you shortly.” Ray said.

“Okay, I will be here waiting for you. Come soon.” I said.

After half an hour, Ray arrived and said,

“The plane boarded from her is going to arrive here late by two hours. We have enough time to talk now. Let’s have a cup of coffee in a restaurant.”

“As you wish,” I went silently along with him.

“Since our wedding I have not talked to you about your past life you led before wedding. I only know

that this is your second wedding with me. Your dazzling beauty and innocence fascinated me very much. I fell in love with you at first sight. However you refused to talk to me many times. I still know I wrote many love letters to you as well to get you at any cost. And you used to simply tear it off and throw at the dust bin.

You know one day I asked you directly,  
“Do you love me or not? I wanted to get married to you.”

Then you looked at me and said, “I hate love and wedding both.”

After two years you asked me, “What am I?”

“I am a pilot. I said so proudly to you.

In the course of time, all your hatred luckily turned out to be love for me. We loved, got married and had Riya, a paralyzed daughter unfortunately later.”

“Say something, Rose, I am talking to you now,” Ray asked,

“Why are you so silent since long I observe you?”

“Is there something serious happened in your life and therefore you never want to share your problems with me at any cost.”

“Rose, you know if we share our problems to others, we get a relief from our stressed minds.”

Ray was closely reading her face and expecting her at least say something in turn.

“I am indeed worried to recall what happened with me before our wedding. It is a story of suffering and great relief I could have because of a savior from skies for my help. Perhaps you may get angry with me and break up our relations forever.” I spoke softly in a muffled voice.

“I am strong and mature enough you know. I believe in you more than I believe myself. I trust you, my sweetheart. Come on; tell me truth you have concealed in you for a long time.” Ray insisted.

“Okay, as you insist.” I cleared my voice and made it a little louder gathering my courage.

“As you know, I belong to a very poor orthodox family. It was very difficult for my parents to run the family. My parents used to suffer economically since my birth and had a debt upon them to pay in time. They always wanted a boy-child to be born in the family and my birth disappointed both of them anyhow. Before my birth, they actually wanted to

abort me. However, my father couldn't do so because there were a few complications which might have occurred to my loved mother causing her to die after the abortion. She had been suffering from stomach ache since their wedding and all the treatments given by doctors were in vain. And being so poor, we could not afford high fees of doctors for her operation. Her problems of operation actually gave me my life back." I sighed and then continued.

"My mother passed away when I was just ten years old and my father met a road accident at the time of my first wedding."

Ray found her sobbing; her red eyes and reddened face clearly showed him that something very serious must have happened in her life. However, the tears on her cheeks had almost dried up.

I continued clearing my voice again and said,

"Ray, do you want me to continue my story or stop her?"

"I think you might have a lot work to do." I said.

"I have still one and half hour more; you do not worry about me." Ray said,

“However, I am indeed sorry I hurt you by asking to divulge your past in front of me. You are nostalgic now. I can understand how much you must have suffered in your life since your birth. Now the days of your suffering have gone far away from you. It’s your new birth; just think so. The past is gone, you know. Leave what happened with you and be positive to yourself henceforth. Think of the present and future. And bear in your mind one thing that the pricking past you led before must not spoil your present and future. What happened with you was your past and me and Riya is your present and future. It’s me who troubled you a lot; I cannot see you crying at the time of my departure from you.”

“No, Ray...

Now you will have to listen to me now,” I confidently continued.

“Just before the death of my father, my wedding was arranged with a carpenter. Feel the wrath of time; he turned out to be drunkard, cruel and short-tempered. Every night he used to beat me and I was forced to listen to his stupid stories for hours, you know. He used to scare me and threatened to kill me asking for



the reasons of fewer dowries he received, which is fifty thousand rupees my father had given him selling our home. My father died on the same date I got married to him in the road accident I told you. I was completely embarrassed to lead my wandering life thereafter. I was lonely, homeless and friendless.”

This is actually where my sufferings begin. Ray, I was fed up with the life I led - a ceaseless chain of endless miseries.

I went on...

“One day my husband made a deal with Mia, a prostitute and sold me to her profession for the sake of money. He got ninety thousand rupees in turn. Ray, this is true...I was forced to enter that profession. I still know it was my first day; the customers were struggling to get me and ready to pay the money Mia wanted. I was looking at all happenings through a key hole. I was beautified and made to sit in a room. I cried loudly and refused to do so. They convinced me saying that every girl refuses to do so, later it becomes habitual. They even warned to kill me if I do not listen to them. The dark woman chewing a betel nut repeatedly said to me,

“If you are not ready within five minutes, I will pour kerosene on you and burn you here.”

Ray, after all, dear death seemed to be a great relief from the life of death I led. Indeed, the life I led was dead, empty and meaningless. Later, I gathered courage and fought against the oddities of life and helpless fate that have already brought to the world unknown. It was 11 O'clock at night. A drunken middle-aged man entered my room. He seemed to be very rich from a good family; perhaps the dress he put on was expensive. His golden chain was coming out of his unbuttoned shirt and a thick bracelet was moving with his hands. Then I thought for a while, how can the people belonging to good families come here without thinking of their own families? How can they keep their children and wife at home and spend nights for sensuous happiness here? Many questions were baffling me and making a way to come out. I was feeling very vulnerable and worried about my own life trapped in labyrinth. I was thinking where to go. I was talking to myself: “Is there any way that can take me away from all such maddening crowd of absurd life? Will there be any mythological hero

or superman or a savior who can rescue me from horrified situations I got trapped in?

Do you want a glass of beer? A customer said to me.

“No,” I said.

He was approaching me as if he has a complete right to own me legally.

I asked him, “Does your wife know about this?”

He said, “Yes, my children too.”

He continued, “And knowing this also, what will they do? I earn money and I have the right to spend the money the way I like. I can live my life the way I feel, you know. What is wrong doing all such things?”

“Nothing,” I said in a little voice.

Something was terribly going wrong with him. I observed. I dared to ask him again,

“Do you not think you are killing a living being here? You know, no woman is willing to do this. She has some problems that forced her to do it.” I said.

“Why should I think about you and your problems now?” A customer said, “The night is mine and I have to live my life the way I want. I am what I am, that’s all.”

I was actually thinking of telling him what happened with me and how I was brought there. However, he

was not in the mood of listening to me anymore. He said:

“I am an educated man. I can understand almost all problems of women in London. I know what makes them come willingly or unwilling. You do not teach me.”

“Then your education is a complete waste of time. You are young; you can eradicate problems of a woman.” I added.

“I am not a social worker or reformer.” He said strongly.

You know when prostitutes get older; there is nobody to look after them. They are used by the people like you and thrown in the dust bin to rust forever.

“What is your profession?” I asked him.

“A businessman,” he said,

“I had a great loss in my business since I started my business. Business means loss or gain comes naturally, nothing else. It happens with every businessman. I am stressed and annoyed, to release my tension and anxieties, I do come here sometimes. I usually have a beer and come here seeking pleasure”, he said.

He asked me,

“Have you been brought here forcibly?”

I said, “Yes.”

“Then tell me what happened with you,” he asked me.

I told him what had happened with me. He listened to a story of lost parents in early age and extreme cruelty of my husband. He thought about my brutal destiny ending me forever. All of a sudden, he laughed at me and said,

“Every girl who comes here says the same thing you say. This is habitual to me.”

Again he became quite serious and said,

“I met many girls like you. However, nobody is as true as you are. Nobody asked me questions like this. I am truly enthralled by your innocence, homelessness and honesty. You made me feel concerned about the problems of women in London. Every husband wants to know the nature of a woman. However, he fails to know her completely as a wife. Thank you very much for the open discussions you made with me. Usually I come here, do what is meant and leave away. Truly, the tears in your eyes are beyond doubt. Your tears tell me no lies. I believe in you and the stories you told me. He buttoned his shirt and retreated to the

door. He again asked me,

“Do you indeed want to escape from her?”

“Yes,” I said.

He told me, “Just do as I tell you. I will go and tell Mia paying her extra charges to take you along with me to my own house. I am sure that she never says no to me in such matters as I am an old customer and always pays the amount she asks for. You will have to simply get in my car and come along with me silently till we leave this area.”

“Is it clear?” He asked me.

“Yes,” I said happily.

When I was touching his feet, he retreated a bit backwards and blessed me without touching my shoulders. Everything happening with me was like a dream, absolutely an unbelievable fact of human philanthropy. God in human flesh rushed to assist me. I never dreamt such experience in my life before. He opened the door and finally, I came out of the room. Mia asked him,

“What happened, leaving her so early?”

“Didn’t you like her at all?”

“Not such as you think right now. I’m taking her

along with me as there is nobody at home. Take your extra charges!” He said.

Mia refused to accept the amount; I thought perhaps she expected more money from him. I was indeed bewildered to notice the fact that she didn't take extra money from him saying, “Go anywhere you want, enjoy. However, do not forget to send her back again to me because she is an unlimited source of income in this profession. Send her back before 9 O' clock in the morning tomorrow. You regularly pay money to me. I really feel ashamed to extract more money from you every time.”

I looked at her honesty in the profession like prostitution. I was indeed surprised to see all their dealings of the profession they run.

A blue colored car appeared in front of the gate. I was tensed to get in the car and thought deeply perhaps the man who took me along with him was a cheater or a simple guy. I didn't know about him much. I finally got in his car. He sat silently beside me looking at the running trees on the road in a blank mood. The light music in that car was pleasing me a lot. A car was moving fast on the silent, inviting and blue-coloured

roads in Pisa at night. In front of Twinkling Stars Restaurant, he stopped the car and said,

“I’m hungry now, I need to have dinner,” he then asked me,

“Would you please join me?”

I said, “No.”

Basically, I was very hungry; I hadn’t had enough food for the last many days. He insisted and my steps automatically walked towards a restaurant. He placed a menu in my hand and asked me to order the dish I preferred the most. However, I had never been to such hotels before and I had no idea how to order looking at the menu in a restaurant. I said,

“You give orders for any dish of your choice and a vegetarian dish will do for me.”

He was quite silent, looking at my innocence or perhaps stupidity. He gave orders for me only and he ordered an ice-cream for him to accompany me. He said,

“I’m not hungry. I had food and wine before I left. I am sorry I told you a lie to bring you here. And thanks a lot to you as you opened my eyes. I need to always think of my family first and then business and avoid



going to prostitutes.”

He paid the bill and asked me,

“Where do you want me to drop you?”

I was utterly directionless and I didn't want to trouble him anymore. I trusted that man, however, I still felt like escaping from his clutches at the earliest.

“I am going to Florence.” I said.

He said okay and dropped me at the bus stop nearest to that restaurant. He got me a seat in the bus and said,

“I think you need some money.” I was silent at that time. And he handed me over five thousand rupees and left me smiling.”

“This is my journey from Pisa to Florence by bus, Ray.” I said.

Ray was stunned, silently listening to me.

“What is next?” He asked me.

You know, in fact, nobody was familiar to me in Florence; even I didn't have any relatives there. I was standing beside people sleeping on the benches as their own home. There were nearly about a hundred people in total. The battery of my mobile phone was very low, only one line was dancing indicating

a red light. It was frustrating to look for a contact number of one of my friends in Florence. Finally, I found no contact number in my mobile. I thought that it was totally a waste of time choosing the place for my destination. Luckily, my search for contacts didn't go wasted. Finally, I got one contact of Ruhi, my childhood friend from Pisa. No sooner did I take out a pen to write the number, my mobile phone got switched off. I was disappointed to see all that. Again I tried to switch on my mobile, it opened by chance and I could write the number in the diary. I asked for a mobile to an impeccably dressed gentleman. I was waiting for a bus and I had to make an urgent call to my friend. He gave me his mobile phone and I could call Ruhi. However, I thought that it was an unused call because I knew she was surely from Pisa. I made a call to her and spoke out,

“I'm Rose, your childhood friend.

You remember...

Where are you right now?”

I could recognize her voice clearly as there was a little change in her voice. I felt her voice quite mature.

Rubi said on the phone -

“Rose, how can I forget you, you are the best friend I have ever had. I am in Florence working as a bank manager.

“Where are you now?” She asked me.

I said, “In Florence at the central bus stand.”

“Wait there for a while; I will pick you up within fifteen minutes.” Rubi said. I was crying, however, my eyes were filled with tears of delight for the first time. I thought the world was as if mine then.

At 6.30 a.m. Ryan took me to her home. The same day I shared my painful story to her and she was completely shocked to know all that. Listening to the story, she boosted my confidence and generated in me the feelings of a strong struggler in life.

“Ray, you know the rest of my story.” I said.

I continued, later on I joined Business Hub in Florence and solved the problem of bread and butter and daily wages.

This is what had happened with me, Ray. I was looking at Ray who seemed to have lost in trance. He must have lost his self and deeply absorbed into the story I told him.

“Rose,” Ray said,

“I indeed appreciate all your efforts to come out of danger. I salute you for your valor and learn a moral lesson from you that *a man should not stop struggling until destiny smiles at him*. Please, you do not bother about what I might have felt after listening to your story. In reality, you told me the truth at the right time at a right place.”

“Rose, if you had told me the story at the time of our wedding, I would have mistaken you.” Ray said and went on,

“However, I know you very well. If I were you, I would have done what you did in reality.” Ray spoke out encouraging her.

“This is the time to depart now, Riya might have woken up and you need to get going as she is waiting for you. She is all alone at home, you know.” Bidding a farewell, “see you soon, Bye, Bye.” Ray hugged her tightly and kissed on her forehead feeling love, concern and affection for her.

## IV

### AT HOME

It was raining cats and dogs outside. Trees swayed from the roots to escape from the wrath of red lightening in the dark sky. Clouds were loaded with heavy rain water rushing to win the race of fetching water to the sea on the earth. Uprooted trees have almost blocked all the roads towards the way home. An empty, sightless, blue sky was unconsciously staring at me and scolding me to go home before lightening sparkled in the capricious sky.

No way was perfect for me to reach home at any cost. I gathered a little courage and fought with the cruel nature all around me. I got drenched into water; still I struggled to walk through an incessant flow of water. My sari was torn and wet, and I was feeling a bit heavier to walk all along the way home.

Reaching home, I found my child counting for the last breath of her life. I hugged her tightly close to my heart.

Riya, Riya.

I love you a lot.

I am really very sorry for you.

No response I received from her. So I checked her heartbeats putting my ears close to her heart, nose to her warm breathing, sensing her deepened pulses. I re-sensed her heart beating rarely and breathing hardly. Her pulse was numb and was swelling red. I picked up her in my arms and rushed to hospital. No doctor was ready to admit her as I was penniless. I pulled out my golden necklace so-called *Mangalsutra* and offered to the doctor.

“This is not enough, madam?” a doctor said,

However, I wanted to admit her for operation at any cost. “You first get money from anywhere.” A doctor said, “Money makes the mare go.”

“I do not assure you to cure her completely. You just sign on the paper after paying fees.”

It was a very critical condition of Riya who was relentlessly groaning on the stretcher. The doctor seemed to love money rather than her life. I felt so.

Riya was rolling on the stretcher painfully and the doctor was simply looking at her.

“The child will die if I do not take her to the Operation

Theatre. You do one thing; you arrange money anyhow from anywhere till I take her to Operation Theater. This is an emergency case.” A doctor said and left for the Operation Theatre.

All of a sudden, the doctor agreed with all the conditions laid down to me. Who knows how? And why? I fell down on the bench in the hospital unconsciously and started thinking about my uninterrupted chain of endless miseries.

The operation was successful.

Riya was in a deep thought about her own life in the Operation Theatre looking at her life stuck in a dark room,

“Oh Lord, why did you give me birth paralyzed? You made me seat in a dark room silently for the whole day and night. I’m dying to live life outside, touch rain water and feel ecstasy of life within and without. But, I can’t do so here within four walls. The walls of my room I was trapped in are grey in colour even hate to look at me right now. The mirror hanging on the wall refuses to identify me. It reflects a dim light upon my faceless face doing a little favor of time.

The suffocated, stale air in my room struggles hard to meet the sun rays which are stuck at the cloudy chimney and the air wishes to get drenched in water outside. It is eager to dash against the window bars seeking my permission to release her. Even the mosquitoes are fed up of my dead body lying in a dark room paralyzed in the bed. They also refuse to accept my enmity as they deny biting me. The dark room wherein my destiny put me into is a hell, is asking for a light of hope. The blue colors of the wall turning into white are faint, bare and quite old, are demanding colors of rainbow upon them. The cot on which I was kept lying helplessly seeks to change her position anyhow. The particles in my dark room are encircling me to open the new doors of their destiny and live the life of their own. God has cut a joke upon me making all others suffer because of me. I'm Riya asking for the death of life. I'm killing cruel times having hopes against all hopes of survival.

“How are you, Riya? The doctor asked.

“I am feeling much better,” Riya replied,

“I have no pain at all. Tell me, will I get a complete recovery.”



“Yes, it’s possible. However, you will have to undergo one more operation again in America. And it costs very much, see whether your parents afford it or not. I do not know about it.” The doctor said.

“You are right, doctor,” Riya said,

“We are suffering financially right now. Still, my father has promised to take me to America for the next operation. He tries his level best for my complete recovery from paralysis, a life of death.”

“Then, there is no problem for you at all.” The doctor said to her.

“Now also, my parents have never neglected me since my birth as a paralyzed girl-child. I think that no parents in the world can tolerate all this. My mother always looks after me with love and care and father buys expensive medicines to recover me as early as possible.” Riya cried loudly.

Diverting her mind, the doctor said,

“Do you like reading and writing?”

“Yes, I do,” Riya said,

“My mother taught me how to read and write. You know I can read books, magazines and newspapers to kill my time. However, I tell you the fact that I am

completely fed up of the life I lead. I simply lie on the bed for the entire day and night. Even I am not able to move by myself. I always need a support. I feel like going to school to learn and be a successful woman in my life.”

“How old are you?” The doctor asked me.

“I am seven years old.” Riya said.

“Doctor, at least cure me properly so that I can be a great help to my mummy in her household activities.” She said.

“Medicines I have prescribed are indeed very effective. You will get strength in your organs slowly. Do not lose your confidence and always try to move by yourself slowly. Time is the best medicine that cures all diseases if He thinks so. Now, this is the time you need experts in our profession to help you come out of this completely.” The doctor reassured Riya.

“Thank you doctor for your moral support and motivation.” Riya said.

“Take care,” the doctor said wishing her strength and hope.

The doctor then came out of the operation theater and said,

“Nothing to worry now, the child is out of danger now.”

I was about to touch his feet, once he said so,

“No, it’s all right. Then I offered him the golden necklace for the operation he has undertaken for my child.

He said, “No need.”

“But why? I said.

He said, “All your money is paid and the next operation will be done in America. Take your *Magalsutra* and wear it.”

He gave my *Magalsutra* back to me and said,

“Go home and take care of her. Everything will be all right.” The doctor assured me.

I was indeed surprised about who must have done all this.

“Who paid your fees?” I asked him.

“Just relax, all the fees is paid by the man who told me not to disclose his name.

I was talking to myself that the doctor didn’t know anything about the death of my husband in the

air crash. That's why, he asked me to put on my *Mangalsuta* back.

The doctor said,

“Now, you can meet your daughter. She is perfectly all right now? Please, do not talk to her much.”

“Thank you very much, doctor,” I said and was about to enter in her room to see her.

“Doctor, please tell me. Who paid the bills?” I asked again.

“The man who paid money is the closest one to you. You will be surprised to see him as soon as you reach home.” He confused me and left.

I thought who the man must have been. I then felt for a while that he must be alive somewhere. The news must be wrong. “All the news on the television is not true,” I mumbled.

“Is it not my husband who must have paid all the fees? It is so because he is the nearest to me than all. However, how can it be possible? The official announcement made on the television says,

*“All the passengers in the plain are dead including a pilot and other crew members.”*

## V

### MIRACLE, RECONCILIATION AND HOPE IN TRAUMA HEALING

I was utterly stunned and about to turn around to see him if I could see him anywhere. I visualized that his smiling face was spreading his arms to hug me tightly in his uniform. His eyes were filled with tears rolling continuously on his cheeks. I pinched myself and tried to stop day dreaming.

Hardly had we reached home, I found my home door open. I saw a man of the same height, colour, dress and hairstyle standing in front of my home, waiting for me.

*“Oh, it’s Ray, my dear husband.” I cried.*

I cleared my eyes and pinched myself many times. However, I saw the same picture every time. It was true that I was not dreaming at all.

“Rose”, Ray said, “I am here.”

I hugged him tightly and asked,

“Where were you?”

“And why didn’t you call me that you were alive.”

“Indeed you killed me.”

“It’s a miracle! That I see you alive now.” I said.

“Yes, miracles do happen!

First, you come inside, I will tell you what had happened with me and how I am alive for you,” Ray said,

“How is Riya now?”

“She is out of danger now, she is perfectly all right because of you only.”

I said to Ray.

I was overwhelmed because I got my love back. Riya’s operation was successful and my love returned home. I was the happiest woman in the world. Still I was very curious to know what must have happened with him.

I asked him,

“Did you use a parachute to save your life?

Or else, you must have jumped into an ocean, swum across a long distance and returned safe and sound.”

“Tell me what had happened with you,” I re-insisted,

“I know that you were in the aeroplane. Then, tell me

exactly what had happened with you all?

How is it possible to save your life when the official announcement says even the pilot is dead at the crash?”

I kept on asking him many questions. His safe arrival at home was enough for me, but his abrupt presence had generated many questions into my mind, lingering since long.

What must have happened there?” I asked myself.

I thought as I showered a rain of questions upon him, he was unable to answer me properly.

“Tell me, Ray.

What’s the actual matter?” I asked him when he was silent.

I said to him, “It is true that you were in the same plane that was crashed. Then, how did you save your life?

As per the information I received, nobody was alive after the immense air crash, you know.

“Yes, I know,” Ray said,

“I am exhausted now, I will tell you a detailed story later.”

“I am alive, isn’t it enough for you right now?” He

said.

“Yes, tell me in brief what had happened actually?”

Rose insisted.

“Okay, first you sit in the chair here.

And do not disturb me till I complete the whole story.” he said.

“Okay, my darling.” She said.

Ray went on telling me his story as, thus:

“It is true that you saw me driving the plane as a pilot for the first time. And you know that I was not so perfect although I had completed all my trainings. And this was also true that you had seen me taking off my flight safely in the air. After an hour, I saw a red indicator flickering, warning me a probable danger of an air crash. I knew it was a minor problem. However, it might be a major one any time in the air, I thought. I actually didn’t want to take any risk at all. So, I landed my plane to the nearest airport in Colombo, the Capital city of Sri Lanka. When I met the officers and shared the problem of my plane, they laughed at me and said,

“You are absolutely new to this profession being a



pilot. And you need to have more training for the same.”

Rose, you know very well that I was indeed very scared to sit as a pilot in the same plane and drive it with a known risk. All the officers were simply staring at my long face and enjoying my expressions of unknown fear displayed on the face. Finally, they did me a favor by asking another pilot to pilot the plane. They asked me to train myself well before I enter the profession. They asked me to pay a fine for urgent landing of plane and gave me a new schedule to join the training in the first week of next month.

“Then, what’s it about the air crash I had watched on the television? Was it wrong?” Rose interrupted.

“You are right,” Ray said.

*“The same plane with a replaced pilot got fired while landing. And nobody is alive in the plane.”*

“Oh God, thanks a million!” Rose sighed,

“Oh Lord, you saved my life anyhow.”

Tears were rolling down my cheeks. All were tears of love and happiness. Riya who was lying on the bed helplessly was struggling to get something out of it. She smiled again asking Papa to be with her forever.

“Your phone is ringing,” I said to Ray.

“Just a minute,” he said so taking a phone from me.

He was on the phone for fifteen minutes in the yard.

When he returned, I asked him,

“What’s the matter? Who is there on the phone?”

He said,

“A seller of my paintings called me. He said that he had sold my two paintings for seven hundred dollars each to a foreigner and asked me to collect a demand draft in the evening.”

“Congratulations to you, Ray.” Rose said,

“God bestows upon us a shower of blessings with many hands like this.”

“Thank you so much,” I said.

Then, Ray took out an artistic shell necklace and a key chain from his pocket and said,

“Rose, this is for you. I bought it in Colombo, the Capital city of Sri Lanka.”

“So nice of you,” she said,

“You are alive and with me forever, is the most precious gift to me.”

I was standing in front of the mirror and he was behind me. He silently moved my hair aside and put

a necklace around my neck. My eyes were filled with happiness when I said,  
“I love you, Ray.” I said turning around and kissing him.

On that day, I was on the top of the world. I thanked God for many blessings bestowed upon us. I appreciated Ray for his wonderful gift and his bewildering return. “I forgot to tell you one more thing, Rose.” Ray said. “What’s up? I asked him.

“I got promotion in my profession.” He said.

“How can you get promotion in the beginning?” I asked him.

“I’m going to be promoted to a higher position at the airport Engineering Section office than being a mere pilot shortly. You need not to worry about me as I am not supposed to fly in the sky. I should check plane machines before planes take off. I mean I’m to monitor plane systems as I completed my M. E. (Mechanical) you know. They have interviewed me and verified all my documents.” Ray said.

“Then, what about a new training schedule given to you that you told me earlier?” I asked him.

“Oh, that is only for keeping me engaged at work.”  
He said.

“Please, you say no for this.” I said.

“Look, Rose, a trainer will be sitting beside me  
always.” He assured me.

“Then, it’s okay.” I think.

“What will be your salary for the new job?” I asked  
him.

“\$1100/- per month.” I said.

“Congratulations to you once again!” I said to him.

“Today, God is smiling at both of us with blessings.”

“Rose, we need to shift our house in a couple of few  
days as my office will be in Pisa. I can go by bus from  
Florence regularly, however, that will be troublesome  
to me.” Ray said to me,

“And Rose, why are you so silent now?

Are you not pleased to know this?”

“I’m sorry, Ray. I can’t come with you there.” I told  
him.

“What’s the matter? What’s wrong with you?” He  
asked me.

“You know, it is my birthplace. I spent my childhood  
there and had the worst experiences of my life. I want

to forget them all and live with you happily here.” I said.

“Can you change your office to Florence?” I asked him.

“It’s not possible,” he said convincing me.

“Rose, nothing will happen to you there. I’m with you now. We will live in a good area.”

“Okay, I’m ready as something good is waiting for both of us.

I said, “Who knows what is next?”

“What is next is our present, Rose.” He said.

Within a week we shifted our house from Florence to a good area. The place was indeed far away from the place where I had horrible experiences.

One day, I went to a restaurant with Ray. The family sitting in front of us was familiar to me. It was a family of a customer who saved my life from Mia, a prostitute. I was shocked to see him again as I was trying to forget all those memories from my mind at any cost. However, he was a good man who gave me a new life to live. So, I couldn’t stop myself introducing Ray to him.

After our dinner, I went straight to him with Ray and said to him,

“This is Ray, working as an executive officer at the engineering department in the airport. And I think you know me, I’m Rose.”

“Oh, Rose, I know you well,” he said looking at his wife sitting in front of him.

“How are you?”

“I’m fine,” I said.

“Who are they?” His wife asked him.

“She is my classmate. We have not met since our school days.” He said.

I smiled as the customer told lies to his wife.

Later his wife said, “Okay.”

I was looking at the innocence and simplicity of his wife. His children were very charming, busy at enjoying their food. They had table manners and etiquettes too.

I didn’t say anything to Ray there. When we set out of that restaurant, I told Ray that he was the customer who had saved my life from the clutches of Mia. Or else I would have been a prostitute. Ray then turned

around and waved his hands to the man, the savior. And he could understand what was meant to him. I was looking into tearful eyes of Ray that expressed his sincere feelings of gratitude to him.

Ray said to me,

“Look, the world is made up of both good and evil people together. It exists because of good people like him. Even it is not destroyed by evil people, goodness triumphs over evil after all... Infact, good people wheel the life cycle onwards.”

“Yes, you are absolutely right.” I said.

I also waved my hands to him for the benevolence and kindness he showered upon me. Later, we went to a garden. It was 9.00 p.m. The people were leaving the garden along with their children.

“In London, the weddings are arranged by conventional society in many regions. Parents still choose the life partners for their sons and daughters.”

I said to Ray seating on the bench.

“Yes, it’s true. However, I didn’t get you very well. What exactly do you mean?”Ray said.

“I mean a daughter or a son should be given liberty in choosing their life partners.” I said.

“You mean that.” He said,

“In our nation, religion, caste, color etc. do not stand as a barrier to wedding. However, love surpasses all such barriers. Therefore, we can see many successful inter-caste weddings in London despite disputes today. Again, religion is a big issue in terms of wedding because men are emotionally attached to religious and cultural practices they belong to. This causes many problems to the poor lovers in love.”

“Ray, do you believe in love or arranged wedding?”

I asked.

“Of course, love weddings as we did.” He said.

“Then what do you think about arranged weddings.”

I asked him.

“Arranged weddings are also good sometimes if the life partner turns out to be a good one.” He said.

“Most of the love weddings are successful than arranged weddings, I think?” I said.

“I agree with you because it is very important to know your life partner whom you are getting married to.” He said.

“Look, how our ideas come up with a realistic picture while talking about a serious issue of love weddings



against arranged weddings?” I said,

“A family world of each individual becomes happier if love weddings surpass arranged weddings in London despite disputes in castes or religion. Law and order effectively works the things out in terms of weddings.”

“Yes, Rose, you are right.” He said.

Then, we came home.

The next day, we went to a mountainous area after having been fed up with the hustle and bustle in the city. Ray went to get some snacks for me while I was lonely on the bridge; watched flowing water that was struggling to make her ways. Water was inviting, white with thousands of bubbles rise up and all of a sudden break into pieces. Ray after arriving there asked me,

“What are you looking for so closely?”

“Swallow water,” I said.

“Oh, it’s indeed beautiful,” he said.

“What do you think of the nature all around you?” I asked him.

“Always it hints at us showing how we have to live and lead life ahead.” He said.

“You are right, Ray. I was also looking at courageous waves making their ways through many hurdles. Life is not at all still. It moves on and on with good and bad times of beings. At bad times, life becomes meaningless where nothing seems to please us. And life becomes fascinating to all at good times. Even sand and stones look beautiful at that time.” I said to him.

“You are absolutely right, Rose,” he said.

“What do you think about human life?” I asked Ray.

“Human life is full of ordeals. It always challenges us to outfight all hurdles on the way. In fact, it surpasses them all while thinking about the future. Water never thinks of the past, but it acts in the present time and confidently leads to the future.”

He said.

“Are you looking at a flock of ducks gliding on the water?” I asked him.

“Yes, I witnessed them all,” he replied.

“Look, how nicely they are marching towards us. They are the happiest ones in the world. If I were a bird, I would rather be happier than I am. I love

liberty, a life of own.” I said.

“Who knows whether a bird is happy or sad?” He said.

“Of course, they are happy because nothing hurts them at all.” I said.

“What we behold in reality never means what the fact must be. Perhaps they do not exhibit their grief hidden deeply inside them. They feel like divulging secrets to us about their problems in life. However, they can’t. They are always silent by temperament and remain speechless by the decree of God.” He said to me.

“Perhaps you are right, Ray. Who knows much about their lives?” I said.

“Rose, whatever it is, one thing is true that nature is always beautiful. It fascinates one and all with her unpredictable powers. It’s great solace to sensitive beings that can easily be hurt and get lost in life.” He said.

“Indeed you made my evening special. Thank you very much for bringing me here. I feel very happy today.” I said.

“Okay, it’s time to move now.” He said.

Later, both of us returned home, but still, the picture of water dashing against stones and breaking into tiny pieces was still lingering in my mind. The water which was marching ahead overcoming all the challenges had impressed me a lot. It was a lesson to human beings because it always motivates us to be like struggling waves in the battle of life.

The next day when I woke up, I was bewildered to see the same picture in the hands of Ray as he had painted the picture on the drawing sheet for the whole night.

“It’s indeed beautiful,” I said.

“Thank you, my darling.” Ray said.

“How did you know that I liked the scene very much?” I asked him.

“I can read you very well, Rose.” He said.

I hanged the picture in the gallery where he had written “Struggle like waves.”

It was my time to go to bed.

I asked Ray,

“Will you give me permission if I ask you something for?”

“Yes, of course.” He said.

“I wanted to see Ronaldo, my first husband.” I said, “Why are you still thinking about him?” Ray said, “You have almost forgotten him that you had said to me earlier.”

“It is true that he exploited me a lot. He used to beat me every night. I also said all those experiences still torture me even today. But still, I want to secretly know something more about him anyhow.” I said to Ray.

“Please, never seek my permission for anything you do because you always do the right. I can understand your feelings for him. Every evil man has goodness somewhere in him. Who knows he might have changed into a good human being after the incident? Life changes our time radically once it fleets along with experiences in the course of time.”

Ray said.

“He did nothing good to me. He was the worst companion in my life, an unnecessary load exerted on the earth.” I said.

“Then why do you feel like meeting him again.” He asked me.

“Not only now I felt like this, but also for the last many

months. I certainly feel that something was terribly wrong with him once he sold me to Mia, a prostitute. A man who ruins me finally finds himself in dust. In short, I just wanted to know what happened next in his life. Perhaps he must have remarried to another innocent girl and sold her to Mia.” I said to Ray.

“Okay, we will go there and get information about him.” He said.

“Thank you very much, Ray.” I said.

The next day we set out for that area exploration. It was a hot day. Ray drove me to my old house where I entered as a newly wedded bride. The roads were unfamiliar to me due to the new constructions in that area. The sky-touching buildings had almost closed all my ways to old house of in-law’s family. I could find out a narrow way to reach my house that was indeed with full of ditches to walk through and cross the road. Many houses neighboring my house had been demolished and replaced with new buildings and plot markings. I could see the garden in front of my house. Perhaps, God saved my house from demolition anyhow. Ray refused to come along with me; so he stood near the garden and asked me to enter

in. The old electricity board, poles with hanging wire was the same. I had written on the electricity board “Danger” with a white chalk, it was not yet wiped off by anybody. And a grey-colored building in the front yard stood still as it was before. It was clear that a very few things got changed there after I was sold to Mia, a prostitute. The sand in the yard was heated and felt familiar to me once I trod the path. The colors of the wall were almost faded, and the broken arm chair with wheels recalled me the day of our wedding. Rex, a black dog lovingly looked at me moving his tail and approached me steadily. I took the dog in my arms and consoled him. Everything seemed to be unchanged and still. We had reached that slum area after many difficulties because many new buildings were constructed in the location. No sooner did I look at that house, all my dead memories stood in front of me like a king cobra. My mind was still looking for something I lost there forever. Perhaps it was my dad who met an accident and died on the spot in a road accident next to that house. Who knows his memory must have brought me there again?

However, the door was locked. I found an old woman sitting in front of the house. She recognized me and said,

“Where have you been so long?”

“It’s a long story. I will tell you some other day. You first tell me why the door is locked.” I asked her, “Where is Ronaldo now?”

“Ronaldo, he was handcuffed by the police because he was indulged into the sex scandal of supplying girls to Mia, a prostitute. I heard that Riley, an old customer of hers lodged a complaint against Mia who had been running a profession of prostitution since long. Many girls selling bodies against their will were forcibly brought into the profession. All those girls were released from there by the CBI government officers on duty and given good jobs as a source of income thereafter.” That old woman said.

“Oh, I see.” I said, “Then Ronaldo must be in jail.”

“Rose, he is no more now. As you know that he was addicted to drinking wine excessively. Almost all the doctors warned him that even a single drop of wine would take his life away. He didn’t listen to anyone else and finished his life. He died in jail just in a week



after his arrest.” She said.

“How are you, Rose?” The old woman asked me again.

“Fine,”

I said it retreating myself and returning to Ray forever.

After five years, Riya was hospitalized in America for her operation of paralyses she had been suffering for a long time. Fortunately, she got a complete recovery there and we got back to London.

Riya grew up as an independent, strong and beautiful woman. Her operation of paralyses in America and the medications prescribed by doctors made radical changes in her body. She resembles me in facial features.

One day, I took her to school for admission. The principal interviewed her for half an hour and allowed her to seek her admission in seventh standard. She completed her education from seventh up to graduation in the same institution. She is talented and a born artist as her father. It was in Prince’s Science and Arts College in Florence, a well-known college.

She was good at learning from the beginning. She used to analyze facts on her own with whatever experience she had during her span of life.

“Live-in relationship, I hate it,” Riya said to Isabella, her friend,

“Why a man falls in love and asks for the death of love in it.”

“I do not get it well.” Isabella said.

“I mean a live-in relationship is the worst thing as it does break the divinity of love.”

“No, I do not agree with you in this regard,” Isabella replied,

“Live-in relationship strengthens a delicate bond of love firmly. It brings body and soul together and boosts confidence, so lovers need to continue their relationship further.”

“You are right, Isabella. However, it is a great risk to the life of a girl. Once she is rejected by her lover, then she has to be locked in a dark room for the whole life. Who guarantees a lover after all?” Riya said.

“I got what you meant. Look, a man is free, and in the same way a girl is also free. She can look for another life partner.” Isabella said.

“Who will marry her then?” Riya said.

“Anyone,” Isabella said.

“You have gone mad,” Riya said,

“Live-in relationship brings two bodies close. However, it keeps minds stand poles apart.”

“What do you mean by love?” Isabella asked Riya.

“Love is love that counts even after death. It is an inseparable bond between two lovers. There is a presence of divinity where two bodies and true minds intermingle forever. It is beyond the reach of social obligations.”

“Which wedding do you prefer?” Isabella asked.

“Of course, love wedding as my parents did.”  
Riya said,

“My parents love each other. They are always together and have the same vision of life. I was also brought up lovingly. They gave me birth as a girl child and saved me from paralyses. Suppose if they had a live-in relationship, the story would have been different. I truly hate live-in relationship and believe in true love.”

“You are right, I do not argue with you. But still, I feel that a live-in relationship would be better where

one can choose the life partner of one's own and lead the life confidently thereafter. If one likes it, one can continue one's relations. If not, quit it any time and go for the next." Isabella said.

"Isabella, something has terribly gone wrong with your mind. Life is yours, make a decision of your own about love and wedding. As I am your friend, I tell you one thing that this is a very important decision in life; the choice makes us suffer in life. A choice is suffering and suffering is an action. So, please, think deeply before you do anything with your life. We are born and die once." Riya said.

"We are actually getting late for our last lecture. Our English professor must be waiting for us in the lecture hall."

"My dear students, what is a live-in relationship?" The English lecturer asked students.

Isabella looked at Riya angrily and got up from her seat. She collected all her notebooks and suddenly left the room with many questions unsolved and unexplained. She was stressed while leaving the room.

"Look, this is the best example of live-in relationship."

A lecturer commented on her and all the class roared in great laughter.

Ray was busy in his office work. I was alone at home. Riya also came late that night. She came and asked me to come along with her upstairs. We went upstairs.

I asked her,

“Why are you late today?”

“Mummy, today there is a meeting with the Principal about college gathering. Each student is said to participate in at least one of the events. I suggested my name for painting, quiz and essay-writing competition. Our gathering date is near; please guide me in essay-writing.”

“What’s the topic?” I asked her.

“Save a Girl-child: Need of Life.”

“You can do it.” I motivated her.

“Yes, I can. But still, I need some stuff to think over the matter deeply.” She said.

“I can help you by telling my own story that you do not know. It’s about saving a girl-child.”

I said,

“Will you listen to it?” I asked her.

“Yes, mummy. Tell me now, what’s that? She showed

her interest in the story.

Listen to the true story now, Ronaldo is your grandfather and Rayna grandmother. Both are my parents, got me.

“I know they are my grandparents and their names too, mummy. What’s next?” She said.

“Do not disturb me till the story is over.” I said.

“Okay, go ahead.” She said.

Once Ronaldo said to Rayna,

“We had better check whether we have a son or a daughter.”

“No need to check it. It’s God’s gift I’ll give birth to any one of them, a male or a female. A son or a daughter makes no difference to me.” Rayna said to him.

“You bitch; it is a big difference to me. I want a son only. If a daughter is born, I’ll kill you and your child together.” He said so and left home.

“How can I convince my husband the worth of a girl-child? Who will tell him about it? Is he a beast or a devil in the guise of a human being?” Rayna was talking to herself.

She was not able to walk properly due to much stress

and a girl-child in the womb. She was psychologically sick and needed support of the wall for finding a way to the bathroom. She had to do all her household activities before your grandfather returned home. She used to put her hands firmly on the wall as she walks. At night, Ronaldo talked about the same subject insisting on the birth of a boy-child. Your grandmother was fed up of all that.

“You bitch; you have already given births to two girl-children before. And you know me very well that I killed both of them. This time, I want a son at any cost. If it doesn’t happen, I’ll kill you both and remarry another woman.” Ronaldo shouted at her.

“Do as you like. However, this time I’ll give birth to a girl-child.” Rayna said to him.

“How do you know that it’s a girl-child in your womb?” He asked her.

“Yes, it’s intuition, I can feel her inside. She is asking for her life.” She said,

“You are a killer. You have brutally killed our two girl-children.”

“Yes, I am. Do you have any doubts?” He said.

“Not at all.” She said.

“I want a son now because a boy shines like a sun and can continue our family line whereas a daughter can’t.” He said.

“Just think of Savitri, Zansi Queen, Indira Gandhi and Mother Teresa, all are great Indian women. All of them were born as a girl-child and not a boy-child. Whatever may be the consequences of my action, I’m giving birth to a girl-child because this is a question of a lost identity of a female in the world. Who are you to decide what sex a baby should carry taking a birth? I heard that a male is responsible for sex determination and not a female. It is something like XX chromosomes for a girl and XY for a boy. Thus, for a male it is XY and a female XX both.” She said.

“I do not know; what are you talking about? Stop quarrelling with me and do what I say. This is my final order to you as I’m after all your husband. Just follow what I say as I know that the brain of a woman lies in knees. Therefore, you’ll not think what I can.” Ronaldo said.

“Yes, you only think of killing daughters after birth. You have already killed two daughters and you’ll do the same with the next girl-child in my womb.”



“What can I do? You tell me I want a son. You also know why we want him.” He said.

“You want a boy-child, but it doesn’t mean to kill girl-children. God must be taking an acid test because he wants to know how many girl-children you can kill like this.” She said.

“You bitch, keep quiet.” Ronaldo slapped her.

“Okay, you can kill me, but not my daughter. I touch your feet.” She said.

Ronaldo deeply thought over the matter. Rayna expected a positive change in him by God’s grace.

“Yes. Rayna. You are absolutely right.

You are indeed brilliant.

How lucky I am to get you as my wife producing girl-children only.” He said.

“Why did you get married to me then?” You had better gotten married to a man who can only give you men. What is the role of a woman in this world? Let her perish and you can conquer the whole world. Man is incomplete without a woman.” She cried,

“You men are indeed selfish. You just think about yourself. I lived with you for three years. All the

years have been horrible to me. I wanted to die now.” She said.

“Go and end yourself then; who stops you?” Ronaldo said.

“A girl child in my womb.” She said,

“Who gave you birth, a father or a mother?” She asked him.

“Both,” He said.

“No, a father cannot produce children. It is a mother who does it.” She said.

“I do not want details, stop now.” He said.

“Your mother is a girl, not a boy.” She said.

“You are right.” He said.

“There will be no girl-children on this earth if all the people go on killing girl-children like you.” She said, Ronaldo was silent. Perhaps he thought about his follies he has committed.

“Don’t talk nonsense.” Ronaldo shouted all of a sudden.

“Yes, it’s true. There will not be girls on the earth as you are eating them voraciously.” She cried loudly.

“You have gone mad.” He said.

“Most of the species get extinctions in the course of

time like tigers, sparrows and dinosaur and next one would be girls.” Rayna said and entered the kitchen room.

Ronaldo kept himself busy in repairing the old cycle. He acted as if he is doing something seriously. However, something was working on his mind. Perhaps the pointed words of Rayna harmed him deeply and must have washed off his rusted brain completely. There was a heap of dust mounted up on his brain. He thought over something very deeply showing her annoyance.

Ronaldo washed his hands and entered the kitchen room. He hugged Rayna from behind and said,

“I’m sorry.”

“Sorry, for what?” She said to him.

“I’m indeed sorry for what I said to you in anger.”

He said,

“I should not have said so.”

“I know why you say sorry to me. You said like this for thousands of times before.” She said.

“But this time, I’m indeed serious.” He said.

“You men read the pulse of woman’s limits.” She said.

“You are parasites; you are sweeter at night and harsher in the day, only to taste the honey of love.”

“Please, leave me alone and let me work now. Nobody is going to help me.” She said.

“I know you are hungry.” She said,

“Wait in the hall for a while till I finish my work.” She said.

Ronaldo left the kitchen room. Rayna simply smiled at the absurdity of life. She perceived the mentality of men altogether.

She said to herself,

“The nature of man and woman stand poles apart. Both of them are born to harass each other. There is absolute imperfection in their minds and therefore their unification of bodies is beyond a reach of comprehension to human minds.”

Rayna finally served him food. Her cheeks were reddened with deep lines of his slaps on her cheeks.

“Is there any bottle of poison in the kitchen?

Please, pour it in this curry.” Ronaldo shouted at her.

“What’s wrong with you now?” What happened?”

She said.

“I saw your medical report kept in the cupboard and

asked a man to read and tell me. It's a girl-child again to be born in the future. I thought you just tell me about the birth of a girl-child to prepare me mentally."

Ronaldo said,

"When did you go to the doctor without my permission?" He said.

"Last week, I went to him out of the fear of giving birth to a girl-child again." She explained.

"Now I knew why you were giving me a lecture on a girl-child." He said.

"Actually I wanted to tell you about it, but didn't dare to do so." She said,

"I'm pleased to know that you have a very good habit of looking into my matter."

"Yes, you are my wife." He said.

That night, the behavior of Ronaldo was abnormal. Then, he said nothing to me and silently had his dinner. She was surprised to notice a radical change in him that he didn't fling his served plate on the ground as he usually had to do before. All of a sudden, he became cool. Even Rayna didn't dare to say a word to him that night.

"Good night," Rayna said to him and entered the

bedroom.

“Wait for a while; do not close the door from inside. I’m coming, so keep it open.”

Ronaldo said.

Rayna got surprised to see many changes in his behavior. She was very happy to know positive signs of human transformations in him. She got into her bed room keeping the door open for him.

After half an hour, Ronaldo opened the door and entered in. He found her asleep and therefore sat beside her silently. He wanted to say something to her, but searching for a few words of expression. He waited for a while to see her awake, but she didn’t wake up.

“Are you listening to me, Rayna?” He said.

There was no reply from her except a few echoes in the room. Ronaldo got her awake from sleep moving her right hand to him.

“What do you want?” She asked him,

“I’m feeling very sleepy now. I’m tired very much due all the house hold works. Please, let me sleep and do not disturb me.”

Then, Ronaldo entered the kitchen room and brought

some sugar in his hand. He switched on the light in the dark room. It was the light of his knowledge and unusual change in temperament.

“Rayna, you are giving birth to a girl-child. Yes, I am not killing her at all. I am extremely sorry for killing girl-children before.” Ronaldo whispered in her ears.

“Am I dreaming? Yes, I must be dreaming.” Rayna said to herself awaking from her sleep.

Ronaldo repeated what he said before and with that, she got up immediately and reclined her back to the pillow.

“What did you say?” Rayna asked him.

“I’m not going to kill the girl-child in your womb. In fact, I would like to listen to what you say to me.”

Ronaldo said.

She was overwhelmed and hugged him tightly in her arms, tears rolling down her cheeks. Those were motherly tears of extreme ecstasy she had had in life for the first time.

“Is it Ronaldo, my husband?” She said.

“Yes, it’s me.” He said.

“Give birth to a girl-child. I’m your husband, and you’ll have to follow my orders.” He said.

Both of them laughed with each other. True smile on his face was a ray of hope for Rayna.

“I want to talk to the baby in your womb.”Ronaldo said to Rayna.

“Keep your ears on my stomach and listen to her. You then tell me what she says to us.” She said.

My parents used to tell me that a girl child indeed spoke to my father at that night. You believe me or not, but it’s the fact of my life.

*The girl child is no other than Rose, your mother.*

“Tell me Mummy, what did you say to my grandfather when you were in the womb?” Riya asked me.

Listen now,

*“Baba, I love you very much. I want to see the world. You should be so cruel upon me and kill me expecting a boy-child. I can do what a boy can. I cannot get myself immediately transformed into a male and take a male birth only for you. You’ll have to believe in me. Do what my mummy always tells you. I am a witness to all your tensions, stress and anxiety before my birth. Let me see you both and the beautiful world that surrounds me. Even I want to see, whom do I resemble more - you or my mummy? I know both of*



*you are very protective, loving and caring. You are not like other parents who do not let girl-children see the world.*

*Papa, I feel your presence with the breath of my mother. But now, I am feeling very sleepy. I need to sleep not in my mother's arms, but in the dark womb. I feel asphyxiated inside and feel like coming out as early as possible. You call me Rose, when I am born because I always beg you for my birth. This is your turn to survive me by a favor. I'm your Rose, a hope of life. I'm still scared that you will kill me when I'm asleep in the womb. Please save me. Good night to you both."*

“Rayna, I heard her voice indeed. God talked to me through her voice. I have committed a sin of killing my two daughters brutally. Her birth is a not penance for me. I will give her birth. I do promise you.”  
Ronaldo said.

“The next day your grandmother was hospitalized and she gave birth to me. Yes, it's a real story of my life. Your grandmother told me the story in detail later. Your grandfather also told me that he heard my voice

from my mother's womb. Today, every girl-child talks to the world before she is put to birth in this world through the womb of her mother. The society changes her mind set-up now. I gave you birth even you are a girl-child because I make no difference between a son and a daughter.”

I said to Riya.

“Thank you, Mummy.” Riya said kissing me.

“The entire world should think like you, Mummy.”

“Truly,” I said.

“The birth ratio of male and female is unequal, Mummy.” Riya said.

“That is correct. The world has to keep the balance of ratio.” I said.

“Isn't the stuff enough for you, Riya?” I asked her.

“It's more than enough. I'll do the rest.” She said looking at my eyes full of tears,

“I'm deeply inspired by you, Mummy.”

Riya had a great fascination for drawings and paintings like her father. From the beginning, Ray guided her properly and that's why she could stand on her legs as a confident woman. Gradually, she got her name and fame in fine arts she was interested in

and became a very famous artist like Ray. We then decided to let her pursue her career in fine arts. We loved her very much as she was the only girl we had in our family.

After many days, I asked Ray,

“Is it a sin being born as a girl-child?”

“Not at all,” he replied.

“Yes, it’s a sin I mean.” I said,

“You know I suffered so much in my life like other helpless women.”

“You are right, Rose, however, suffering matters to both male and female beings. Then you’ll have to say suffering is a sin.” Ray said.

“Today, both male and female are the same along with their rights.”

But still, a woman suffers more than a man.” I said to him.

“What do you think?”

“After all, it’s our perspective how we look at the things around us.” He said.

“The birth of Riya is a virtue to us. She is perfectly all right today by God’s grace and with our efforts. She is a victor rather than a victim. Her paralysis is

no more today.”

“Surely, Riya is gifted. She resembles you in the art of drawings and paintings and me in beauty you say so.”

I said.

“Rose, I must say that you suffered a lot in your life. You are a successful woman. Ronaldo, your ex-husband who sold you to Mia, a prostitute at the first night suffered for his actions.”

Ray said.

“All is possible because of you, Ray.” I said.

“No, it’s you who made all impossible possible. You have all the guts in you as a strong woman.” Ray said it and took me in his arms tenderly.

The next day, Riya showed me all her drawings and paintings. It was indeed outstanding. She pointed out a painting entitled as “A Red, Red Rose” which inspired me a lot. The painting showed Rubi struggling to come out of it. She was holding a candle and stepping out of a threshold of the door. Her painting brought tears into my eyes. Then I asked a few questions to Riya:

“Who is a woman?”

“It’s you, mummy.” Riya said.

“Okay, who is the man standing behind the woman?”

I asked her.

“That’s my dad because behind every successful woman there is a successful man.” Riya replied.

“What fire is this on the wall?” I asked her.

“It means that she has been scorched in a fire within four walls confinement and is shedding tears of fire. Red color symbolizes her revolution and resolution to come up with new ideas to change the social and mental make-up. She is walking through darkness to light.”

“Good, tell me, what do you mean by this threshold?”

“It’s a barrier to human welfare at large. Man is free whereas woman is left in a dark room to die. If she crosses a threshold of her imprisonment, our nation can progress as she walks along with the man to eradicate evil from the minds of people who still make her suffer.”

I indeed liked her painting and asked Ray to send the painting to Germany. Ray sent her painting in an art exhibition held in Germany that fetched her the first prize.

At that night, I dreamt my father, who said,  
“Rose, I’m terribly sorry as I could not look after you well. We used to think the birth of a girl-child was a sin. However, nothing was like this. Today I can witness how you succeeded in your life and well-settled with your family now. You have achieved everything in your life. I am proud of you, my daughter. My blessings are always with you. I learnt the lesson that a girl-child is equal to a boy-child. You have proven that we should not get scared of things around us. In fact, we need to be brave to fight against evils resided within and without to achieve our destination.”

Saying so, my father disappeared in the skies behind the clouds waving his hands to me.

Even I was mentally and physically exhausted, I could not sleep that night. I was just looking at a woman in the paintings hanging on the wall, “A Red, Red Rose.”

It was 10 o’clock in the morning. I was late to get up early next day and therefore, I had to do lots of work at home.

Riya was reading a newspaper.

“Riya, someone is knocking at the door. Can’t you hear the sound?”

Go and see who is there.” I said.

“Mummy, here is a postman.” She said.

She looked very happy after receiving a letter from the postman.

“Whose letter is it?” I asked Riya.

“Mummy, this is a letter from Germany. It must be about the result of my painting sent to them.” She said.

“Open it and read the matter.” I said.

“Mummy, my painting “A Red, Red Rose” fetched the first prize.”

“That’s great.” I said,

“When is the prize award ceremony?” It must be in Germany I think.”

“No, Mummy. This time luckily, the venue is Pisa, London.”

“Congratulations to you, Riya.” I said,

“Your Daddy would be pleased to hear this.”

“Yes, Mummy.” Riya said.

“Tell me why the program is organized in London instead of Germany.” I asked her.

“Perhaps most of the winners are from London. I’m not sure.” She said.

“Mummy, Daddy is calling me. Excuse me.” Riya said receiving the call.

“Riya, tell me good news.” I said.

“Okay, I will.” She said.

Riya is on the phone.

“Hello, Daddy. I would like to tell you good news. Guess what it might be.” She said.

“Congratulations to you, Riya. You won the first prize for your painting A Red, Red Rose.”

Ray said from the other side.

“How did you know about it as I have just received a letter from the postman?” She asked him.

“I have also got one.” He said.

“Indeed,” She said.

“Yes, it’s true. I have also received a letter from Germany where I got the second prize.” He said.

“Did you participate in the competition, Dad?” Riya asked Ray.

“Yes, because I wanted to compete with you.” He said.

“Please hold on, Dad. Someone is knocking at the



door again.” Riya said.

“Here is one more letter for you. I’m sorry I forgot to deliver this letter.” The postman said.

“One more letter,” Riya got surprised.

“Who is at the door, Riya?” I said.

“Mummy, it’s a postman.” She said.

“Is there any letter for Ray.” I said.

“Mummy, again this is a letter from Germany. What will be the matter inside?”

She said.

“Your Daddy must have got the third prize for his painting, that is, one of my favorite paintings.” I said.

“Daddy said he got the second prize and you said he got the third prize. I’m confused now.”

Riya said.

“Can I open the letter and see the matter inside, Mummy?” She said.

“Let Ray open and see. Wait for a while. When is he coming home tonight?” I said.

“By 7 o’ clock.” She said.

Ray returned home at 7 p.m., all were waiting at the dining table for dinner. Riya handed him the letter.

“Why did they send me two letters? I have already

got one in my office address.” Ray said.

Ray opened the letter and read the matter inside.

“Here I got the third prize. Who must have sent my painting in the competition?”

Ray asked.

“It’s me.” I said.

“Rose, it’s you.” He said.

“Yes, it was a painting showing waves struggling to make their ways through stones.” I said.

“I knew that they were going to accept two paintings at a time. However, they have accepted both of them for the prize.” He said.

“Three prizes belong to our family.” I said.

“Yes, Mummy. You are absolutely right.” Riya said.

“Congratulations to you, Riya, once again.” Ray said kissing on her forehead.

“Thank you, Daddy. Both of you are my inspiration.”

Everybody was very happy in the family that night.

“On which date is the prize distribution ceremony going to be held?” Ray said to Riya.

“On 25th December, the Christmas Day at Blue bell Auditorium, station road, Pisa.”

Riya said.

On that day, we reached the place on time. The hall was over-crowded and beautifully decorated. The paintings of winners were displayed on the board at the entrance. First of all, Ray received his two prizes. Then a painting entitled “A Red, Red Rose” was enlarged on the big screen. Riya’s name was announced to receive the prize. They asked a few questions to Riya after receiving the first prize.

“It’s indeed wonderful. I appreciate you for this beautiful painting.” The chair-man said to Riya on the stage.

“Who is your inspiration?” He said.

“My parents,” She said.

“Who is the woman in the dark room?” He asked her.

“Rose, my mother.” Riya said.

“Is she standing on the threshold at the door?” He asked her.

“She has already come out of the dark room holding a candle in her hand.” Riya said.

With this answer, there was a huge round of applause in the audience.

“Why is she crying now?” He asked her.

“No, those are the tears of happiness.” She said.

“Which lesson can we learn from this painting?” He asked her.

“Woman is power. She is not found in the dark room today. However, she has become a light to the world.”

I was looking at the woman in the dark room in the painting who didn't dare to cross the threshold of the room. Some invisible powers were pulling her inside and trying to extinguish the candle held in her hand.

“What are you thinking, Mummy? Riya asked me off the stage.

I uttered shading drops of tears from my eyes,

*A woman is still in the dark room*

*Let love reign the world.*

*Let the world be a light to her.*

*Let women be treated equally with men.*

*Let there be a light for a woman in darkness!*

***“To sum up, Resilience is the ability of Rose as a human being to adjust to adversity in life, keeping HOPE while living. Time in life overcomes all the endless chain of miseries by giving inner strength to face all odds. Overcoming life's struggles puts a cute smile on her face forever...”***

**Resilience** is a thrilling story about **Rose** who comes across unexpected events in her life. Her first husband, **Ronaldo**, sells her out to a prostitute-dealer, but she is eventually freed. She moves on avoiding to have anything to do with men until the young pilot, **Ray**, finds her attractive and starts wooing her. Ill luck strikes and **Rose** finds herself having to bear excruciating pain again. The novelist uses **Rose's** resilience to portray the strength of a woman. The story ends on a blissful note.

## About the Author



**Pramod Ambadasrao Pawar**, a poet, novelist and critic spent his childhood at Gunjoti (where he was born in 1976). He teaches English and is the Director of IQAC at Sant Dyaneshwar Mahavidyalaya, Soegaon, Dist. Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Maharashtra State, India. He is the Editor-in-Chief of *Epitome: International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Seagull Journals*. He is author of 16 books and has edited 27 books. His theories like Trans-deconstruction, Trans-interpretations have been a bone of contention at national and international conferences. He has been a visiting lecturer at Gulbarga University, Kalaburagi and Ramanujan College, the University of Delhi. Pramod Ambadasrao is a winner of several awards.



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