

The Love Letter

Vaikom Muhammed Basheer

Translated from Malayalam by Kaveri Ashok

Dear Saramma

How is my friend spending this exquisite time scale with such youthful bliss in life and the fragrance of love in heart?

If you ask me—I'm spending every single moment of my life in loving Saramma. What about you?

Think deep and bless me with a sweet reply

Yours

Keshavan Nair

So he wrote in one catch of breath and suddenly had to look back. Aah! That feeling of Saramma watching his back smiling dearly. Just, a feeling. He read his 'love letter'. Poetry. Philosophy. Mysticism. Why such adjectives! The letter's come out better than expected. He folded the letter in 4. He left the bank and walked through the streets. He was thinking all the while.

Would Saramma laugh at him on reading the letter? Or would she reply? ... What would be her reply?....Considering Saramma's nature, laughing at him would be none probable ... He thought of a recent incident. He was chatting away with Saramma One day. Jokes were about women. Saramma said some great poet had sung women were the superior beings created by the Almighty. Keshavan Nair couldn't resist his laugh. "There's nothing but moonlight inside women's head", he said. As an example he talked about the experience of a man who married seven times this seventh wife for some reason (that only she knew) fell off of the stairs and broke her head. The man took him to hospital and was talking to his bachelor friend after coming back.

"Accident's not all that damaging"

"They said she broke open her head!"

"That's right...."

"Could one see the brain?"

"What?!"—That man who knew seven women closely told the bachelor:

"Now could you expect a brain if she broke-open her head?—She's a women after all!"

"I figure from that incident Keshavan Nair told Saramma, that "there's nothing but moonlight inside women's head!"

Saramma just laughed heartily at that. She never said anything about it since. But then the indication that there's nothing but moonlight in Saramma's head also could have touched her couldn't it? She's a female, after all...would've forgotten by now.

Thinking so on, Keshavan Nair got into the hotel. Didn't feel like taking coffee. He took a coffee and smoked a cigarette and sat down a long while with hotel, contemplating. Would Saramma sweetly reply, or mock him? Love has not gone anywhere near her! Keshavan Nair has tried a lakh times. But, as he slowly opens the scent bottle of his love, she covers her nose! 'What is this horrible stink?' She gives looks as if these questions were raised! How can she be made to love him?

Love struck, he was approaching his house. As he looked at his room in the first storey of the building, he was shocked! Saramma!

She's lost trying to nudge out something from his room using a long stick through the window! Keshavan Nair was too shocked to go upstairs. What is Saramma trying to steal? ...He has his purse with him, if it's that...or is it my clothes that she wants? ...or some book? In that case, what is there that she's not read?—'you didn't have to do this Saramma! I love you more than this life. If you'd asked me, whatever it is that you wanted, I would've given you with all my heart'— So saying in a melancholic tone, he would haul-over the love letter to her and say: "See this, I'd written this love letter for Saramma". Reading it, she would break down into tears lamenting about the love that she just killed. Then Keshavan Nair would solace her: "That's okay, Saramma, I have forgiven you for everything!"

Their hearts would then unite in love. While standing there, imagining all this, "Hey! I caught you standing here guiltily like a cat. Bank-clerks should work till night!" Saramma's dialogue from upstairs!!

"Oh" Keshavan Nair should weep. He climbed up the stairs. Saramma was all sweaty. Smiling away, she said: "I've been up to this for last one hour. It's just not hooking at the end of the stick! Anyway, I've decided to get a duplicate key tomorrow itself!"

"To open my room when I'm away!"

She gave a smile looking at the crowded streets!

Keshavan Nair asked: "Let that be, what is it that's not getting hooked?"

"Oh! didn't I say that?" Saramma asked: "what were you thinking standing quietly downstairs?"

"I thought..." What could he say?

"I thought Saramma must be trying to take something. What were trying to take with the stick! "The magazine that came for Mr. Keshavan Nair! I saw the postman putting it in through the window. I was getting bored, jobless!"

"Then, why can't you just slowly love me?" Thinking thus, he took out the key bunch (from his coat-pocket) and the love letter and handed over the letter to Saramma with a thumping heart! He shivered a little while giving it: What would she say? She read the love letter and crumbled it and threw it away: "So any other news?"

Keshavan Nair got a sweaty feet at that. He didn't respond. What to say? Stone-hearted females.

Why did God created these at all?....

He opened the room, took the magazine, handed it over to Saramma, removed the coat and hung it on a nail. Saramma opened the wrapper and started going through the magazine as if she had just gobbled up something very hot, but secret.

Keshavan Nair—bucking himself up trying best not to show out his paleness, as if nothing had happened in complete oblivion of the love letter—asked.

“What other's news Saramma? Didn't you have any spat with your step-mom today?”

Saramma as if she had completed her crumbling and throwing the love letter, said: “Oh, I think dad and step mum are going to ask me to pay the rent at this rate!”

“To that extent!”

“Don't ever ask! Plans are to give out my room for rent and...?”

“Then? shift Saramma to my room with me?—“

“What, no! Step-mum has plans of shifting Saramma to somewhere near the kitchen”

“Dad?”

“He has nothing to say beyond step-mum's decisions!”

“How was the nature before dad married step-mum”!

“Step-mum's?”

“Na- Dad's”

“Those days dad used to be DAD! in my opinion, there's nothing, but moonlight inside men's head!”

Keshavan Nair kept quiet Oh! That was something!

After sometime, Keshavan Nair asked as if he'd not heard the moon-light thing:

“So don't you have any rights on this building?”

“What rights?” She said: “It was with the dowry that the building was reclaimed from debts. Dad says all the debts were because of mum's disease and funeral. If only my dear mum had lived for two more years, I could have at least finished my B A degree. Then some job...somewhere...”

“There are many BA and MA degree holders still unemployed. Heavy bribes one has to give” Keshavan Nair said: “But then, in your condition it's terrible not to have any job!”

Saramma looked up from the magazine and asked politely: “Is there any vacancy in the bank you're working in?”

“Small bank, isn't it?”

“Any other possibilities of job... Anywhere?”

Keshavan Nair held up his face and looked at her clear eyes, golden neck and curvy firm bust and thought: what job does females need other than loving males? God created women for loving and to be loved. Not to just roam about as employed people. Nevertheless Keshavan Nair responded pretending deeply thinking over it:

“I’ll try!”

“Why, do you know of any vacancy?”

“yes-- I know of one!”

Keshavan Nair blowed up his heart and thought: “In my heart girl, there’s a big vacancy all for you”. No recommendation/bribe required as well!

Gently stroking the heart, Keshavan Nair said

“There’s vacancy!”

“Where?”

“I’ll tell you tomorrow”

“Job profile?”

“well—“ Keshavan Nair smiled.

Dull! you crumbled up and threw my love letter didn’t you? and you have nothing to say about it, huh? I write love letters daily to every other female, a pervert, huh? Item!...Job... I’ll give you a job...

Keshavan Nair suddenly felt the pride of being born as a man. He stroked his upper lip with left hand. Next time, at least a half moustache should be fitted in there! with a playful smile in his eyes he declared:

“I’ll tell you tomorrow, for sure!”

“Chuck tilling, will I get the job?”

“100%”

“Thank God! Huge relief!”

She did not utter a single word about the letter and took the stick and magazine and went downstairs. Reaching her door way, she shouted to Keshavan Nair: “Don’t forget about the other thing”

He did not move. He did not have the guts to take a look at the crumbled-up love letter that she threw away. He controlled his rage, and shouted back with a cruel laugh dipped in fragrance:

“Don’t worry!”

Chapter 2

“Here, girl, is the cute key to my heart!” In this soliloquy next day morning Keshavan Nair left for bank putting the key to his apartment on Saramma’s lap.

That evening, when he returned Saramma gave the key back. He took the day before’s magazine went upstairs, opened his room, pulled a chair and sat down browsing the magazine. H! The joy of victory to be! Victory even before the war! Male genius work this way! When she sees what job he has for her, Saramma—she’ll tear him to pieces? He thought to himself and laughed. He laughed thinking over and over! As he sat there, Saramma slowly made an appearance upstairs. Although he knew that she was very anxious about the job, he just sat casually as if there was nothing going on: “So what is new, Saramma?”

“Oh nothing much.” She smiled in her usual style: “Anything missing from your room?”

Of course! You have stolen me, as such, my precious lady!

Keshavan Nair said stoically: “Didn’t check!”

“Then please do!”

Keshavan Nair kept quiet. He pretended to be completely absorbed in the magazine while constantly witling that beautiful fragrant secret in his heart to be told to Saramma. That secret is about to ‘pop!’ out of the scent-bottle of his heart! Saramma stood by the window watching Keshavan Nair’s centre-parted curly shiny hair, slowly moving slightly red lips, broad chest that went up and down in rhythm of his breathing. Then she slowly, humbly asked: “you didn’t say anything about the job, as yet?”

“But I don’t think you’ll like it, Saramma!”

Saramma said:

“If the remuneration is less—that’s fine. I’ll accept it, anyway. I’m tired of this life. Honestly, do you know what all creepy feelings, let’s hear about that?”

“Oh! Taking my case all the time! I’m serious. Being born as female is like... Any job I’m ready to accept”

“Do you know the domestic chores?”

Saramma was surprised: “Why?!”

“Just like that—a question!”

Saramma said: “Well then, I do! I know how to cook rice and vegetables. Delicacies. Tea, coffee, cocoa, ovaltin...uhum—“

“In short—if one brings house some food, then you know how to make it edible and serve—“

“—Why? Are you planning to make a cook somewhere?”

“What? No! Nothing of the sorts, just asked, that’s all! Usually educated women know nothing about the kitchen. Their clothes and body are not meant to get dirty with the smoke and ash of the kitchen. They know how to dress up, and deck themselves up with jewellery and make-up, how to apply talcum powder, how to spray perfume, Then with their “pom-pom” bag—“

“Pom-pom bag?”

“Hand-bag”

“Oh!”

“Aha- so they walk hanging the pom-pom bag! She is a lady!....”

I asked to know if honourable Saramma is one among those ladies!”

“Oh, neither am I honourable nor do I have a Pom-pom bag!”

“But then, Saramma what do the ladies carry in their handbag?”

“One li’l mirror, one li’l powder tin one li’l comb”

“Would there be love letters in them?”

“Love-letters?”

“Yes; they might be storing their hourly collection in them. By evening when the bag gets full, they’d transfer it to a huge box!”

“I don’t know anything about those. I have not even seen a love letter—What is the job you were talking about?”

Liar-women! Liar-woman’s great grandmother!! Keshavan Nair said: “But then- Saramma...you won’t like that job!”

“Oh God’s sake! I’ll like it, like it, like it!!!”

“Are you sure?”

“A thousand times over!”

“In that case—“ Keshavan Nair hesitated. How to say? “You won’t like it!”

“Heavens! I’m telling you, I’ll like it!”

“But! What if you will repent your decision?”

Saramma stated once and for all: “No! I shall bear with whatever be the consequences, whatever be the sacrifices I have to make! You know one secret? Before you came to stay here, last year, I had three marriage proposals one after the other. I was happy all the three times. Not thinking about the fortunes of marriage with some unknown person: I thought I’d flee finally out of this hell of an existence. But all three crashed. Nobody marries without dowry in our community!... That is also because of me, according to step-mum and dad! Anything and everything I’m

responsible! If it doesn't rain in this place then also I'm responsible. For escaping from here I tried for jobs in many places. But then there's no vacancy anywhere for me alone!"

"There's vacancy!"

"Where?"

"I'll tell. What is this dowry, actually?"

"Bribe given to male to take care of a female"

"Not Clear!"

"Listen—Suppose, somebody is marrying me...--"

"Ok—Let it be myself!"

"Oh!... If I marries one and takes me away, then—for my food, decking up, clothes, brushing, bathing, powder, spray, scent-bottle, carrying, delivering babies, funeral etc.. money is required, no? I'll be married only if I give money for all this in advance!"

"That is because nobody is in love with you! Has anybody ever fallen in love with...?"

"Oh! Even then, dowry is required. I told you, it's our custom!"

Keshavan Nair felt very happy at this dowry business. Stylish!

"If only this business didn't exist..." Saramma said

"I strongly repeal this dowry business!" Keshavan Nair Said: "I strongly like this dowry business!"

"Why?"

"Tell you what! This business is there in Namboodiri community, as well"

Saramma said: "In muslim community also"

Keshavan Nair said: "Those who find it difficult to give dowry should marry from some other community who is ready to marry without any dowry!"

"Ha!...That's something new !"

"Yes, if Nair weds Christian, Christian to Nair, and Muslim to Nair, Nair to Namboodiri, Eazhavas to Christians and—"

"May I ask something in black and white?"

"Of course! Ask a hundred queries! This Keshavan Nair would answer gladly!"

"So, tell me what is the job that you have thought for me?"

"Oh! But Saramma would decline the offer."

"Didn't I tell, I'll never NEVER decline it!"

“Well, then...” Keshavnan Nair opened the scent bottle of his heart and let out that beautiful fragrant secret: “Saramma, like I’m loving you deeply, you’ll have to love me back just so. This is the honourable job that I’d thought for you!”

Job—very smart!

Saramma was taken by surprise, a little. Just for a second. If you ask how, a pretty dainty colour of red flushed her cheeks. Yes sparkled. Not only that. She smiled beautifully and stood there slightly swaying like a piece of art!

Keshavan Nair’s heart overwhelmed like a dam overflowed! He said: “I have been in love with Saramma since a long time. More than me, my heart, my life, my—“

She smiled. Blushed. Her eyes lightened

Keshavan Nair asked:

“Saramma—what do you say about the job?”

Saramma smiled and said slowly very slowly:

“Job’s not that bad! what salary have you decided?”

“Salary/2 Ha! so you want to fight? war! not bad. The blood of war heroes flow in myh veins...

Declare the war! Fight with all might ... Victory or death! Inquilab Zindabad!... Keshavan Nair, seriously, asked:

“What salary do you expect?”

“Decide yourself!”

After a deep thought, Keshavan Nair decided:

“Twenty Rupees!”

Saramma said:

“That’s not reasonable at all!”

“But there’s no way that I give yuo a penny more. Small bank, small salary. understand?

The last savings, after I pay rent to Saramma’s dad, debt to the hotel-owner, laundry charges to the washerman—and cutting down on this and that almost starving in fact, is what I’m planning to give troubles are there in your job? you just have to love sitting, lying down or walking, don’t you? Think about it.”

Saramma said:

“Job is very tough! You just have to work nine hours of 24hours. Fifteen hours you sit back and relax. What about; my job! Not a single moment to rest. Day and night, in food and sleep—I have to think about Keshavan Nair—isn’t it? ...When Keshavan Nair cries, I should also cry, when he

laughs, I should also laugh, when he ea I shouldn't, when he sleeps I should wake and think about Keshavan Nair!"

She looked at Keshavan Nair as if she just took a very bitter medicine. Then asked:

secretly, "So, this job that you gave me is that permanent or temporary?"

Keshavan Nair stated:

"Permanent! Lasting! Infinite!"

Saramma has hugely relieved: " Oh goody! So—if honourable Keshavan Nair fuses out also, I'll have this job?"

"Sorry?"

"After thy death also, will my job continue?"

"Undoubtedly! Even if I beautifully enter the next world, you have to love me beautifully enter the next world, you have to love me sweetly, beautifully!"

Saramma had a doubt:

"If you're in grave, then who'll pay me?"

Keshavan Nair didn't say a word. What to say?

"This silence ticked a laughter in Saramma.

She mocked:

"Although there's but moonlight in my head, there's this problem with the job. After you pass away who would give me the salary?"

How to handle this one? He thought strongly. Finally he felt a solution.

He smiled: "How about us dying together?"

"Aha! Nude parade of selfishness! When Keshavan Nair dies, I have to die along, huh?"

"Are you mocking form of me?"

"Not at all. Telling facts not mocking. Oh...Being a women? Even if I broke open my head, where's the brain? Women have only moonlight in their head, right?"

"Forgive me Saramma! I am not as smart or intelligent or beautiful as you are."

"See, now you're mocking from of this helpless me!"

"I'll never even mock my Saramma!"

"Ya—Go on!"

Some nerve broke inside Keshavan Nair: "Will I mock my sweet heart? Will I mock my darling? will I mock my heart? Will I mock my merry soul? Will I mock my angel? Will I--?"

Saramma interrupted:

"Just a ;moment, I want to ask something!"

"You may ask demend"

"Am I your sweetheart?"

"Yes"

"Since when?"

"Long back?"

"How long?"

"very long back!"

Then why didn't you say this news till date?"

"Didn't I say? I think a bout it everyday, I write love letters to you everyday."

"Then?"

"I tear it off!"

"Is that how it is?"

"Yes"

"In short, I'm thy sweetheart!"

"Yes!"

"In that case—you'll listen to whatever I say, won'tyou?"

Keshavan Nair got excited:

"What ever you say. You want me to kill someone, I shall. You want me to cross mighty oceans, I shall. I shall play with the mountains, if you shish. I 'm ready die for you, Saramma!"

"You don't have to die for me, as of now—Now, please stand on your head—Let's see!"

"Really? I literally have to stand on my had for you?"

"Did I hear a word 'really' in black and white??"

"Not at all!" Keshavan Nair got up, all happy.

"Is that it? I can do something advanced if you want to!"

"As for now—this much would do!"

“Right! Take this!”

He took off his shirt and put it aside on the chair. Then, tied up his dhoti, somersaulted, stood there his head on the floor and legs up, like a stick! She observed his head to toe, elated. Then remarked: “Ave! Cool!!”

Keshavan Nair asked, r

emaining in his position:

“Samma—do you love me?”

Silence.

He asked again:

“Have you accepted the sweet-- beautiful love job offer?”

She crept to the stairs quietly, wnet downstairs and called back:

“I’ll sweetly tell you tomorrow!”

Chapter 3

“Have you accepted the secret beautiful love job offer?” Keshavan Nair asked the next day.

“I’ll sweetly tell you tomorrow!”

The next day when he asked also, Samma said:

“Tell you tomorrow!”

The next day again he asked, she said: “Tell you tomorrow!”

The next day Keshavan Nair di not ask! He announced:

“I’m going to suicide sweetly! what’s the point in living further?”

“Very good! And then, let someone write a tragic epic on you----

“The love-saint who suicided sweetly!”

Keshavan Nair kept quiet.

Samma asked:

“So you have decided surely to commit the sweet-suicide?”

“Yes!”

When is that holy event happening?”

Keshavan Nair kept quiet.

Samma asked:

“So you have decided surely to commit the sweet-suicied?”

“Yes!”

“When is that holy event happening?”

Keshavan Nair kept quiet.

Samma asked:

“How are you going to sweetly suicide!”

“I haven’t decided upon that as yet. Thinking about it!”

Samma advised:

“you can run yourself over by a train on the railway track or else hand yourself on a flower-tree. Which of these are you planning!”

Keshavan Nair kept mum.

Cruel heart! A female’s double-double-cruel heart!!

Samma advised further:

“There’s another way. No one will come to know as well. Take a small boat to the middle of the lake, carry a heavy stone and rope with you when you go. Then tie up one end of the rope on the heavy stone and make a pretty loop on the other end around your neck. Then with a beautiful scream of “I’m off!” Jump of the boat!”

A female’s thousand-doub le-cruel heart!

Keshavan Nair said:

“I have discovered another way! I’ll hang myself here! As I hang there dead, on my foot there’ll be a big peice of paper tied up “world! There’s absolutely no relation between my death and cruel hearted Saramma. It ‘s true that I love Saramma and she doesn’t love me! It is also true that Saramma crumbled and threw the sweet, beautiful love letter that I gave her, brutally! Even then—world! My death is in no way related to the cruel-hearted Saramma—Keshavan Nair who died for Saramma ended with this helpless signature!”

“What other news!”

“Nothing! not a thing!!”

Saramma said:

“I took the loveletter and used it to put rock salt!”

“In that love letter written in my heart’s blood?”

“Yes!”

The diamond-hardness of women-heart! Keshavan Nair was dumbstruch what to say?

So, many days passed awy listlessly and aimlessly!

He used to just walk away without talking or looking at anybody—blowing up his face.

He couldn’t even look at women! He hated tham so much.

“Bloody fools! cruel –cruel hearted!”

Saramma is also a bloody bloody fool! Cruel-cuel hearted! Keshavan Nair is also a bloody fool. But not cruel-cruel hearted! Every man and woman in this world is a bloody fool! As this notion was beginning to get sronger in Keshavan Nair—one evening. Saramma came but to the courtyard, stood in front of Keshavan Nair and politely put out her hand, as if expecting something. Keshavan Nair didn’t get a thing.

Saramm bowed and asked

“My salary?”

“Salary For what?” Nothing got into Keshavan Nair’s head. Seeing his state Saramma said: said as if he broke a promise and embarrassed her:

“Oh—so, this is how it works, finally, huh? I should have known! Does the world say that there’s nothing but moonlight in my head for no reasons? It’s been some thirty days since I took up the tough job of sweetly and beautifully loving you...”

“Aah” Keshavan Nair’s face lit up, eyes brightened up.

His heart blew up like a football and stroked his ribs from inside.

“Darling then why didn’t you tell that sweet, magnificent new to me till now?”

Saramma replied in a complaining, painful tone: In this exquisite time period of life with such youthfulness and fragrant love in hearts—if someone just walks off talking/hearing nothing, thinking about suicides, what am I supposed to do?”

“Any other news in store?”

Saramma said:

Nothing! Not a thing!”

Keshavan Nair commanded:

“Come!”

He walked. Saramma followed. They went upstairs. Keshavan Nair went inside, opened suitcase and took out two tenners and with a throbbing heart put them in an envelope, addressed

To

Ms. Saramma Madamme

and handed it over to her.

Saramma asked:

“Love-letter?”

Keshavan Nair didn’t say anything. Love letter! Let her be on her toes!! But then, Saramma was calm and peaceful.

She took out the notes from the envelope and carefully examined them holding up in the air seriously like some big business lady:

“Not take notes, I believe?”

He didn’t say anything;

“Okay”. She warned: “Never again delay my payment. Do it first of the month, I want my salary here!”

Keshavan Nair wanted to hold Saramma and kiss her once and over a lakh and nine times. He got a little closer to kiss her.

Saramma said:

“Stay there, a four foot away!”

“I just want to kiss you!”

“Me?”

“That’s funny! There’s no kiss-thing in our deal?”

Keshavan Nair kept quiet.

Puhh! A deal!

This way, five months passed. Handed once a hundred rupees to Saramma. He never enquired as to what she did with them. Still, in the third month she informed: she won a lotter of Rs.1000! The luck of a 1 Rupee that Keshavan Nair gave her as salary. Keshavan Nair didn't give much attention to such things. How can he be attentive to such dry financial crap. He's in the moonlight of love, it's not possible to grasp anything clearly. Believe what every your lover says. It's fine if he's getting nothing in return. Act as commanded by her. Walk in the path she points to—he can't do anything beyond that. So, according to Saramma's suggestion Keshavan Nair applied for jobs in many places in foreign countries, why? Because Saramma said so—But then, he also did things that Saramma didn't say as well. When Saramma fell ill and was bedridden getting a doctor to take care; huying medicines and giving them to Saramma; feeding her; trying for peace between sstep-mum and Saramma giving small speeches to Saramma's dad about fathers' duties—and so on. But she never showed gratitude or said thank you to him. All this, Keshavan Nair forgot, but the unbreakable part is when she starts off her talks with her cutey start of—"In this exquisite time scale of youthful bliss in life and fragrent love in heart--!"

Keshavan Nair goes pale at that. He keeps noticing if she starts her talk with that. If not he sighs, relieved. In spite of all this there's no associated with the affair.

It keeps on deepening and strengthening secretly and beautifully. He wanted to see her all the time! He wants embrace her, kiss her. This desires are limitless. Men!

Saramma? she has never shown a sign that she's in love wigh Keshavan Nair. Not in talks, not in acts—not a clue. Women!

In that stage, farewell came. Keshavan Nair got a job in some foreign company. Very high remuneration. Keshavan Nair accepted the job according to Saramma's instructions.

Saramma said:

"So, I'm also going to get a high salary!"

That's all Nothing else to say. Saramma reminded him.

"Send me the money order every first of the month. You know the address, right?"

Keshavan Nair was mum. What to say to a cruel-hearted female?

Saramma asked:

"When are you leaving?"

Keshavan Nair replied:

"I have to go to take charge in ten days. So, I'm planning to leave of the day after tomorrow. According to it, I resigned my job at bank as well"

"So, you've surely decided to leave this place, haven't you?"

"What a question?"

“Am I still your lover?”

“Of course!”

“Are you ready to even die for me?”

“Yes!”

“Honestly?”

“Honestly!”

Saramma said:

“You don’t have to die now. But, can you not take up the new job if I ask you to?”

Leave the job? In that case, it will be very difficult—not way to pay the rent. No food no clothes—real difficult. May have to beg in the streets! Keshavan Nair stand at the ground, sitting down. what to do?

Saramma walked to the staircase. Keshavan Nair quiveringly called out:

“Saramma I have to say something.”

She came back.

“If it is something new and beautiful about love, then I’m tired of hearing those! Love is a crappy thing!!”

Keshavan Nair was dumbstruck.

Pure love—crappy thing!

She said:

“Tell—anyway, I’m paid for hearing all this.”

“It’s just entertainment for you!”

“You wanted to say this?”

“No.”

“Then?”

“You also come with me. I can’t live alone there!”

Saramma suppressed laughter. She asked:

“Are you scared?”

“No, Saramma—I lo—“

“Saramma I lo! you’ve said this lakh and nine time, haven’t you?”

Saramma asked: What is that which so called love?"

Isn't it difficult to tell that? Keshavan Nair knows very well what love is. But, he was a little shy to say:

"Love, Romance—They are all sort of like moonlight—Sweet, beautiful, fragrant moonlight is what is love!"

"Sweet beautiful, fragrant moonlight!" Saramma exclaimed: "The thing you say is inside women's head?"

"Not sweet beautiful fragrant moonlight. It's just normal common moonlight!"

"Nice!"

After sometime, Keshavan Nair asked:

"Would you come, Saramma?"

"If I come?"

"Live as my life as long as the moon and stars!"

"Don't we belong to two religions?"

"So what? We'll have a register marriage?"

"Don't you want any dowry?"

"Just give yourself completely as dowry. Saramma you are the unextinguishable light in my poor life—Saramma, you are the —"

"One moment please! Other doubts, I have!"

"What are those?"

Smiling mischievously, Saramma said:

"I can see big problems as we live as Mr Keshavan Nair and Mrs. Saramma wedded husband and wife. When one goes to temple, the other goes to church. Two communities! Always, the church and temple in between us!"

"Reasonable thought!" Keshavan Nair said. "There might be many things such as these. Take our lives for instance. I have experienced many difficulties, so have you. That all troubles have you face for so long! Have your step-mum and dad behaved well to you! Step-mum's cruel-mind! Community, church: Just think: Two independent mature individuals. With little education and little intelligence. The community is not giving to feed us. Let the church and temple remain where they are. There should be no walls between us. Patience, sympathy, empathy etc. shouldn't be forgotten got it?"

"Got it." Saramma thoughtfully said: "What if there are other doubts as well?"

"If there are other doubts, then this Keshavan Nair would solve them. Go on."

"I'm feeling shy."

"Say it beautifully blushing."

Saramma asked;

"Won't we have kids?—which religion would they belong to? I don't like to bring them up as Hindus. My husband wouldn't like to bring them up as Hindu either! In that case, what would be their religion?"

Keshavan Nair was sweating. He had never thought about that. Very true—what religion would the kids be? Keshavan Nair contemplated. Deeply thought. Fumed his head. The nerves bulged out from his temples. His forehead was sweating very much. No solution to be seen. Thoughts mere tipping and falling in the darkness. Not bring able to see light. Suddenly, a thought appeared like lightning. One door of light opened. He announced as if he saw a beautiful garden.

"Yes—I see it!" "What?"

"Let me say." Keshavan Nair said:

"Let's not bring them up in any religion! Let them grow up as religionless!"

"Like animals? birds? snakes? allegators?"

"No!"

"Then?"

"This is a trick, when they become mature, teach them. About all religions—unbiasedly. Then when they are about twenty-twenty two years, let them accept whichever that appeals to their heart!"

Saramma said happily without facing him:

"Fair enough... How about name? If my first baby were a boy, then what shall we name that precious one?"

Keshavan Nair was in trouble:

"True! What'll we name that precious baby? Neither a Hindu name nor a Christian name."

After a little thought, he was again excited.

"Tell you what" he said:

"We can give him some stylish name, from some other community."

"So every one 'll think that my precious baby's from that community, wouldn't they?"

"Right!" Keshavan Nair realised.

"If we give him a Muslim name people would think he's a muslim. Farsi name also... Even Chinese, Russian—no, no, problematic."

What to name? A name that is not used by anyone. There should be nothing related to a religion or belief in it. What is there, like that? Keshavan Nair kept thinking.

Just then, Saramma asked:

“How are Chinese names, like?”

Keshavan Nair said a sample Chinese name.

“Dang Dingalo?”

“Ding Dingalso” Saramma tried calling her first child’s name:

“Beta, Dang Dilghaho—Kahoi HO Hum?”

Dang Dingalro!”

“Goody?”

Saramma didn’t approve.

“My son cannot have that name!”

“Then, there’s Russian. Just ad “sky” “

Saramma asked :

“What -sky?”

“Whatever!--”

“Chaplosky, Chaplosky...No!”

“Eureka! I’ve got them! Stylish names!”

His imaginations broke open!

He said one by one:

“India, Love letter, Short-story, Thunder-storm, Sahara, Sky, Moonlight, Kala Fish, Symbolism, Palm-tree, Candy, Aroma, Ocean, Prawn-eyed,

Friday, cool-boy, Ruby-stone, Fire-flame, Mysticism, star—“

“One moment please! Let me try calling: Beta, Prawn-eyed!! Mera Pyara prawn eyed, Midhai aroma...No!”

She tried again:

“Beta Friday! Beta Moonligh! Beta short-story!”

He said:

“Let’s write each of them down and then take from a lot. No need to quarrel. In fact, double names are trendy!”

Saramma also agreed.

They wrote the names in small bits of paper, folded'em up and shuffled. Saramma took one and then Keshavan Nair took another one. Keshavan Nair opened his bit and announced:

"Candy!"

Saramma also opened and said slowly:

"Sky!"

Both of them looked face to face. Saramma bravely called her son's name:

"Candy sky! Beta-Candy Sky!..."

Pyaraa beta-candy sky!..."

"Wrong!" Keshavan Nair corrected her. He called his precious son's name proudly:

"Sky candy!"

Saramma also liked it very much. She called out her precious son's name loud and clear with affection:

"Sky Candy... Beta Sky Candy... Where are you beta sky candyyyyy!"

"Ultimate! Keshavan Nair gave the judgement: "Mr. Sky Candy! Shri. Sky Candy!...Comrade Sky candy!"

Then Saramma had this big doubt:

"My precious son's communist?"

Keshavan Nair laughed:

Ha! Let him by na! Let him join whatever dungs he wants to! His wish!!"

"Well then! Let my son be. My son can join whichever party he wishes to!"

My son? Saramma's son? Keshavan Nair was enraged! Selfishness! He reminded:

"Until now, whatever you said, my son my son, my son is what you said. This much selfishness is not good, get it? somebody hear they'll think that I have no rights on Sky Candy. From now on, say 'our son'—Understand, you?"

Saramma also got angry: "Understand you!"

"Good that you reminded me" Saramma showed that bitter medicine face: "Oh! I was just asking about all those, that's all! Don't just behave as if I'm your wife already!—Understand Mr. Keshavan Nair?"

Keshavan Nair's face went out of colour. He asked humbly:

"So, what did you just say?"

What did I say?"

"That you'll be my wife?"

"So?"

"Oh! It's just entertainment for you, Saramma!"

"Ah—Entertainment—You know what is entertainment in life?"

"I don't want to know."

"That's nice! You have no intentions of hearing what I have to say. But I am soulmate! I'm darling! I'm 'Understand,you?'"

"Tell, Saramma—whatr is it?"

"What?"

"Entertainment of life?"

"Ha! keep smiling this way" she got up and went to the sairs she said:

"Fragrance!"

Entertainment is life's fragrance! Very good!! Entertainment is life's fragrance.

Chapter 4

"Saramma—I've to leave early morning." Keshavan Nair said when the night started falling: "Do you have to say something before that"

In this exquisiste time scale of.... some questions I have!"

He was all cold.

She confirmed:

" Question 1—Have you paid all the rent dues to my dad?"

"Yes!"

"Ok. Question 2—"Hotels debts?"

"Yes"

Question 3—Do you have money for travelling?"

"Yes"

"One sub question for that ! -Where did you get the money from?"

“After selling my wrist watch and gold ring”

“Good, so, since after honourable Keshavan Nair leaves this place, I wouldn’t remember him for any reasons, I wish him all good luck in life!” So saying and laughing like a rattle, she went down stairs.

With a painful heart, he called out: “Samma!”

Who hears? Women stands for hardness, cruelty! Real Dukkudu! Dukkudu is what women are!

Chapter 5

Keshavan Nair sat still, like a corpse. Night came. Moon rose high up in the sky. Why? ...Keshavan Nair just sat down still. Finally he got up and lit up the lamp. It’s 11’Oclock in the time-piece! He set the alarm for 4’O clock, closed the door, lied down in the bed tired – last night!... No hunger, no thirst, Keshavan nair lied down his eyes open. Not thinking about anything. Still has eyes open. Not thinking about anything. Still has eyes were filling and with tears spilling women is a cruel—cruel animal! While a man is really really sweet! why did god create these women at all? Not with good intentions definitely! He wanted to cry out loud.

Just ehen, a sound from out side soft and musical:

“Slept off”

She! idiot! Brute! Hardness!

Keshavan Nair did not move.

Again, the same sound:

“Open, its me!”

Keshavan Nair got up and opened the door.

Samma got inside the room.

Keshavan Nair stood at the door itself.

Samma slowly, huskinly called our: “come here; let me say something.”

Keshavan Nair went back and sat on the bed. Samma went to the door, and stood looking out for a long while. Aftger closing the door behind, dragged close the chair to the bed. As she sat – heer elbows on the bed, face held her palms, let-open hair hanging, her busts kept kissing the bed. Keshavan Nair wanted to kiss her neck, her lips, her eyes...But he tried to strengthen his heart and leaned on the pillow. Tears were streaming his eyes then. She asked:

“Why are you crying?”

He kept quiet. She got up, sat on the bed, bent to Keshavan Nair’s face, and gave an ultra-sweet, fragrant kiss on his lips! Pop!!

“Did you hate me?” she whispered.

“Yes”. He held her in his arms. Then smell... All the grief was gone. But he kept crying while smiling.

She said:

“Just like the full moon is glowing while raining—“

“You’d feel a lot many metaphors...You’re coming with me in the train agt 4:30 early morning!”

“Where to?”

“Wherever I’m going to.”

“Then?”

“Oh—It’s always entertainment for Saramma.”

“Yes—love letter!” Saramma smiled.

“Promise that you’ll open this only after the train leaves from the station!”

He said:

“Promise!”

“That’s n enough, swear on something you trust and believe in!”

Keshavan Nair promised looking at Saramma:

“I swear on my Saramma, whom I trust, believe and divinely love, that I’ll open this only after I leave this place!”

“Just wake me when you’re leaving in the morning now sleep peacefully!” She left Keshavan Nair was alone... Her smell!

Chapter 6

Time piece alarm rang. Keshavan nair woke up with a start. Exactly four O’clock! He got up and washed himself and bucked up for the travel. Dressed up, rolled up the mattress and put all his stuff in a suitcase. After that, went down, walked to the road and got a rickshawala. Loaded the rickshaw with all the luggage; went back and slowly chanted: “Saramma, Saramma”, flashing a torchlight through her window. But, no response...

He pushed the door just a little.

It got open.

As he flashed his torch inside, there was nobody...neither Saramma, nor her suitcase...

What’s going on? where could she gone? Where would she have gone? Light fall on a cover that lie on the table. He opened it and read:

“My Dear Dad and Stepmum to read, Saramma is witing so:

In this exquisite time scale of youthful bliss in life and fragrant love in hearts—Since I've got a job which gives me a very high salary per month, I'm going to my job-place. I've got a person to marry me as I am, in my dirty clothes, without any dowry, as well. Because he loves me and I love him, I request you to think deeply and bless us sweetly with a heartfelt wish;

Dad's and step-mum's

Samma"

As Keshavan Nair kept the letter on the table, closed the door, came out, got into the rickshaw and quickly reached the Railway Station, there she is standing sexily—Samma, wearing a beautiful smile.

She asked:

"How did you know I came?"

"Sixth sense! A man's beautiful brains!"

"Man's crappy brains! Not because you barged inside my room and read ;the letter I wrote for my dad and step-mum?"

"I'll tell you, girl...I'll tell you everything!"

He bought two tickets.Both of them settled down inside the train with their luggages.

With a wonderful excited whistle, the train rushed. They sat next to each other slightly touching, in silence. Train stopped at places. Finally, they were all by themselves. The train stopped at a station. Keshavan Nair ordered for tea. Samma said both of them shall have coffee. Keshavan Nair said both shall have tea. Both of them got angry.Ultimately, Keshavan Nair took tea and Samma coffee. The sun also beautifully rose up happily. Train slowly moved over a river that flowed like gold. Keshavan Nair, forgetting the quarrel about tea and coffee, called Samma filled with heartfelt ecstasy:

"Honey!"

Samma snuggled close and replied:

What is it, Sky Candy's daddy?"

" Dear, Beautiful, fragrant, sweet moonlight!"

Samma pinched ;Keshavan Nair.

Keshavan Nair said:

"I'll punch you in your tummy!"

Samma's eyes welled up. Women—what's the trouble in bringing up one tears? She just sobbed without any reason! When he saw that , Keshavan Nair's heart ached!

He kissed her eyes: "Go away!" Samma said: "Don't touch me!"

"Why so?"

"After I did so much sacrifice, you behave like this to me!"

"What behaviour? ... What sacrifice did you do, Samma?"

I left my dear dad, stepmum—everything—behind for you, didn't I?"

"Yes! So?"

"You cannot even drink coffee for me. Not even this small sacrifice you can make?"

Keshavan Nair was shut up. He thought about all the women and the women-to-be in this world: fooltools!

“Not even a small sacrifice for me...” she continued: “ And after all this, now you’re going to puch me in my tummy!”

“Madam, sacrifice lady! You Sky Candy’s mummy!”

“Yes?”

“Today we’ll have register marriage and would be a fush-class bhusband and wife in public. Are you ready?”

Saramma didn’t say a word.

Keshavan Nair pinched on Sarammas thighs, slowly nicely

“Hey, you! Do you agree!”

“I said yes! silence means yes!”

“You shall name complete freedom in three things!”

“Only tiny-winy three things?”

“Yes.”

“Food, clothing, Beliefs.”

“So-we’ll have two kitchen in our home?”

“Just one li’l kitchen!”

“I should cook two kinds of food?”

“Just one kind!”

“According to whose tastes?”

“My home maker’s!”

She smiled.

“Fair enough! I’ll go outside and take tea!”

“I won’t allow that! All the salary that you get, you’ll hand over all the money to me!”

“My dear you, how will I take tea, then?”

“Sacrifice: what all have I sacrificed for you!”

“Haven’t I once stood on my head for you? what about that? ”

“Oh, is that a big sacrifice? There are people who have sacrificed their kingdoms for love, who have fought with allegators for their love!”

“My dear beautiful damsel!

My sweet beautiful, fragrant moonlight! Sillything. If you want, I can sit back and sacrifice kingdoms. Fight with a 1000 allegators. But to stand on your head at least once for your love! Who has done this before? Will there be a sacrifice to this standards in the world history? Keshavan Nair stood head-on-heels in front of Saramma.

What is a more amazing sacrifice than this, my girl?”

“Sky candy’s daddy!!”

“Yes, my grill”

“Hmm...”

She bent down and kissed on Keshavan Nazir’s feet. Keshavan Nair held her up and embraced her. Running train who would see?

She put her hands in his coat pocket.

He asked:

“What is my sweet beautiful moonlight searching for?”

“The cover that I gave you!”

“Love lletter? Bullocks! I did n’t read it!”

Keshavan Nair took the cover and opened it and looked at it astonished

Notes...Notes...A bundle of cash!

She counted. Total of 1099/- exact!

“Buy one wrist watch and gold ring from this, ok?”

Although Keshavan Nair was happy to see the money, he was anxious to read the love-letter. He asked:

“Where’s the other thing?”

“Other thing?”

“Love-letter?”

“Oh! you can’t wait to read it, can you?”

“I just want to see my my precious one!”

“Then see it!” she smiled dearly at Keshavan Nair: “I am the love letter!

Young men, and young women—

is what love letter is !

Keshavan Nair just loved it:

“You and me...”

“Style! where’s the other one, show it to me!”

She took out an ancient piece of paper and gave it to him. He opened it up from its crumbles and held against light. A unique writing he’d seen somewhere long before! As he started reading it, Sarmma put her hands around his neck and went on kissing him. And said:

“In this exquisite time scale of youthful bliss in life and fragment love in hearts—didn’t I say we ourselves are the love-letters!”

“My dear woman, yes! I get it. Let me just read it!”

“I won’t let you!” She held him tightly. She kept kissing him in the neck and everywhere. Train is running with an extremely happy lovely, lovely whistle. Keshavan Nair strived to read the ancient piece of paper that Sarmma took out:

“Dear Sarmma,

How is my friend spending this exquisite time scale of youthful bliss in life and fragrant love in hearts?

If you ask me—I’m spending every single moment of my life the loving Sarmma. What about you? Think deep and bless me with a sweet reply

Yours

Keshavan Nair...”

THE END