

A Shadeless Depart

"It's him, your Dada", the loud clear voice of a eighty-three year old lady, who often trembles and troubles other with her speech, made a painful crack among a crowded Bus seekers, whom I responded in a very usual turn over. I with a shameful regret asked 'Dadima' to be quiet. She suddenly pretended to be engaged in correcting the horned-spectacle which had already exhibited a cloudy look as a result of Dadima's few drops of excitement. Actually, I am the real reason behind her cry but no regrets, as I believe that Dadima is feeling better than the last three years.

∴ The hot sizzling heat of sun seem to shine more brighter over the bus, which made me to take a lengthy flight to those days. All, ~~at~~ except a single old figure that of my 'Dada' - a strong village man, who spend his most of time wandering alone in the fields, which would be richly cultivated with wide variety of corns, streamed complete and coloured in front of my eyes.

Every summer I will take long drives from the busy mumbai rain to the calm and peaceful

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village, where I spend my rest of lazy er. days. For a girl 'without parents' it was best station of comfort and care.

The two-storey building remains empty until I arrives there. My grandparents, who were almost in their 80's finds their own ways to get younger and younger. In that village I found a happiest couple - my Dada & Dadima. Dada, takes me to the holy land of meerut where we spent our time enjoying delicious pani-puri, base-gulas and my favourite 'chat-masala coffee'. When I had them with leaking mouths, my Dada wipes his wetty eyes of pride and affection. In the way back he always used to request me not to inform Dadima, a health-conscious wife about the tasty sweets swallowed.

We both could feel the lovely smell of roasted corn and soup which mostly make our summer mornings warmer than ever. Dadima always ate her meal in Dada's silver-plated dish. They shared a bond of love and like even in the late 80's. In night, I often slept in between the couples, like a little girl with a burning thirst to hear the romantic stories of prince and princesses. My grandparents sometimes seems to be the real prince and prin-

THRISSUR - 3

cesses. When I depart with sad emotions my grandparents console me and make me feel blessed to gain education in one of the reputed institutions in their context. As soon as my smoky four-wheeler leave the mansion, they both live with a hope of next summer. Dada commonly says "you are my corn, my sweet corn".

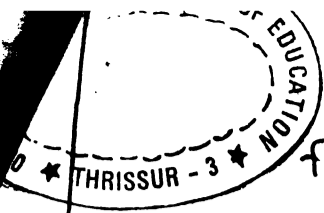
The tightly-packed bus made a sudden break, with a loud shout few men and a sea of women travellers rushed out immediately. I diverted my vision to my 'badima' who seems really happy and freely held my hands to pass me with a letter. I was curious but didn't want to expose my curiosity in such a scene. I gently opened the crushed letter, my eyes were searching for a date, date of arrival. Yes, as per my desired answer, it came just after last Friday. The letter was attached with a single note of paper which conditionally carried a ^{piece of} information - Art Exhibition.

Now I know, why my granny, who never

even desired to get a walk outside the village home, suddenly asked me to take her out that too, to Mumbai. Exhibition was grand, but it doesn't left a pleasing look on my granny. I think she could not fulfill her actual intention behind the visit to Mumbai.

After granny made sure that I read that letter she again uttered loudly "It's your Dada". I still could not understand what is the actual reason for her long waiting for a man, who doesn't left any trace of hope in us to wait and look for his arrival. But, it might be the fact that Dada ought to be alive somewhere, made 'Nadima' to expect that it is the letter that she might write to her, one day prior to his comeback.

As a granddaughter, I personally began to cultivate a painful anger to my 'Dada' who left us with no reason. When I glance to the concluding para's of the short letter, I was amazed to find written "Corns are about to reap".



For a moment I too had a strong feeling that grandpa is alive somewhere. But, as a well known grandchild with well known reason awareness about her grandpa's departure, reason how can I give such a hope to the old eyes which expect too much ^{far} from the reality.

Grandpa had left for pilgrimage, but he had also left the world forever - the reality and my conscience pricked ^{and my conscience pricked} me but its the truth. With artificial courage, I lifted my eyes from the cold letter to Dadima to say that "he will come back one day, that day is almost nearer, as you believe". Dadima's eyes lit with tears once again, she held me closer and kissed me affectionately on my forehead.

We were heading to the village yard, which appeared more lively from far eyes, and healthy corns shone gracefully. Yes, the corns are about to reap! Dadima made a silent get down and walked awfully towards the fields. The sun was shining as if it is about to meet its end. The very next moment, I deliberately accompanied

6
Dadima who was or pretended to be busy on carefully getting the cobs out. One by one she plucked each and dropped them into the muddy basket, most of the cobs were reaped, when a cob is plucked the shade that it offered to old white head disappeared. later on there happen to be no trace of cobs and no trace of shade it offered!

When Dadima went on plucking cobs, I could see that the shade shrinks completely with no regret. Dada was the shade ^(cobs) the shade of protection, which now remain to be as a mere hope. With no pre thoughts I ran to Dadima ^{and} hugged her, we together reaped the entire field by evening.

Now I know what Dada actually meant by calling ~~him~~ me as his 'sweet cob'. I believe that he was preparing for this departure and also prepared his granddaughter to take up his responsibility - to be a new cob of shade, when the shade shrinks, with no news of hope. But why do the shade shrink so quick?