

Peyara Gachh (Guava Tree)

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*Didi*¹ has been scolded furiously by mother for me, and also has got two big slaps. Ok! What is my fault! I love my didi so much. What will happen if she falls! I am telling repeatedly, didi don't climb up to the high branch of the guava tree. It is monsoon. If you fall by slipping your legs, you will break your hands and legs. You see Sourav, falling from the tree that day has been admitted to the hospital. Didi replied from the high branch of the tree, '*vitur dim*'².

What will happen if you fall down didi! I raise a hue and started crying. I am such a boy. Can't I sob like didi? I am crying for didi and didi said from the high branch, "Monkey! I have climb up too high to bring down rotten guava for you. See how you shouting."

As soon as we were telling this mother has run towards us. Seeing to the high of the tree Said in a strict voice, "come down. Come down quickly. Tree-langur." As soon as didi comes down, she got two big slaps.

Didi sat down in grief beside the pond which is little bit far from our house. She threw the guavas one by one which were left in her *kochor*³. After sitting beside her I tell her, "what is it Didi!" She quickly turned her face other side. Though I was sitting for a long time she does not speak. I tried three times to talk with her but she does not reply. I know what man will do in sorrow. They dive in water. I do the same. "It is ok didi" telling this, I jumped straight in the water. I do not know swimming. I certainly jumped to plunge into water.

Didi is a good swimmer. She jumped in the water and dragged me holding my hair to the ferry. I have eaten a lot of water. She turned out the water by pressuring on my chest. I woke up. After giving me a number of slaps she clasped me in her breast. We two are crying.

Didi's marriage. A pavilion has been built in the field. There are uproar and grandeur from the morning. Many things are coming, many people are coming. The preparation of the sweetmeats has been started from the night. The scent of frying '*darbesh*'⁴ and '*pantua*'⁵. Someone is asking to bring that, another one is asking to give that. Sometime there is grimace. '

“Where is the casket of saffron which was here a minute ago? Has the basket gone to have fresh air?” They are taking tea repeatedly. The older people are talking a little and are coughing incessantly. They said to my father, “you have done a big work. It is not a small thing to marry a girl. So where did the expenditure reach? Is it crossed lakh?” In the meantime a man has come in rush and told, ‘see the fish is not come yet.’ All the Brahmin cooks are sitting down. “Who has gone? Who has gone to bring? He might be asleep.”

This is the boundary of the pond, that is the guava tree. My didi became older. A boy from somewhere will come and take my didi to somewhere tomorrow morning.

“The groom has come. The groom has come.”

The sun has set in that side of the field and on the opposite side of the mosque. There is huge light of the marriage ceremony in this side but darkness to that side. The market is small and the traders trade in the light of flask. There are many flasks. There is a row of flasks. Narrow paths. It is quite a thing. There are variety of people and their variety of talks.

I do not want to stay in this marriage. I even do not like the husband of didi. His figure is like iron! The friends of him are also bad. One of his friend said, “Hey ‘chora’⁶! One packet cigarette is not enough, bring a bandage of cigarette.”

I came to the tailor shop of uncle which is in the small market. He is an A-class man. His skin color is snow-white, white hair and beard. His eyes are lined with collyrium. He wears kurta with delicate texture. He prays the ‘namaj’⁷ three times. I like tailor shop very much. There are small pieces of clothing of various colors scatter on the floor. The sound of cutting cloths by scissors. The machines are running ‘gharr, gharr.’⁸ I came in front of uncle and sat down on a stool for a long time.

‘I am very sad. Didi is now going! Didis do not stay. Uncles do stay.’

The marriage of didi was not good. The iron-monster gave so much suffering to didi that she had to come back in about two years. This didi is not my that didi. I can understand that there is no place for didi. The elder people give blame to didi. She should compromise. He is such a high-class man, the owner of a cold-store. If he drinks wine then drinks. Though the husband of Roma drinks local wine, Roma has adjusted with him! Your husband drinks English!

Didi sits in the garden in the plant floor most of the time. I also go there sometime. One day looking to the guava tree she said, “*Buro*’, we have eaten so many guavas of that tree. Now there is no desire to eat. You know *buro* everyone tries to kill girl. I have nowhere to live.”

“I am here.”

“You are a man.”

I became silent. It is true. No one knows where I will go in future. Didi said, “Do you remember one day you jumped in this pond.”

“If you did not rescue me, I would die in that day.”

“Buro what will you do if I jump?”

“Now I know swimming. I will drag you holding your hair.”

“Buro, you will name this pond in my name, ‘Krishna Sayar.’

I know how to cross over the hindrances but still I remained inactive. Didi drowned in that pond. She tied pitcher in her voice. In the morning the long loose hair was scattered on the water. It is waving by the small waves. The ducks are floating apathetically by the side.

The iron-man even did not come to see. The owner of cold-storage!

Didi was right. “Will you take care of mine? There is no exact place where will you live.” Mother asked. “Are you checked? Is everything okay?”

“It is ok mother.”

The flight is at 2a.m. Didi I am going to America. The outgoing meal completed in the noon. Many relatives have come. There are many gossips in relax mood. This is the chance. I went round the lonely pond-side. There are many memories of didi. At last I came to the guava tree floor. The tree is now older. I came older just like uncle. There is a touch of my didi in every branches of the tree. Tree, you are my didi! I hugged the tree.

What is that?

Something is hanging on the high branch of the tree.

I climbed up to the tree for which didi ruled me boxing my ear. I am older now so I am nervous.

A necklace is hanging. As far as I know, it is ‘Mangalsutra.’¹⁰ Then didi was climbed up the tree last time in that night. She gave the mangalsutra to the tree who was her most favorite. I kept it in my pocket.

The time for parting came forward. The flight is taking off. High, higher, higher than the clouds. I touched the mangalsutra of didi in my forehead. I clearly listened to the voice of didi around my ear,

“Buro! I am with you!”

NOTES

1. Didi: elder sister of a boy or girl
2. Vitur dim: in Bengali, people call someone by this expression who is very coward
3. Kochor: a small pocket near the waist
4. Darbesh: name of sweet
5. Pantua: do
6. Chora: lad, chap
7. Namaj: the prayer of Allah by the Muslims
8. Gharr: the sound of working machine
9. Buro: a hearty expression to call someone
10. Mangalsutra: a necklace which a wife wears after marriage.

Translated by **Supratim Saha**

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