

### ವಿಷಯ ಕ್ರಿಪಕಟೆ ಹೇಗಿತ್ತು ಉಪಾಯ

ನಡಿ ನೂರೇ... ನಡಿ ನೂರೇ ಹಿಡಿದು ನಿಲಬೇಡಿ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷಿಸಿ ಉಪಾಯ... ಉಪಾಯ... ಉಪಾಯ... ಉಪಾಯ...

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### ನಡಿ ನೂರೇ ...

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medicines for foolishness." My grandmother uses to say "foolish cow" to podina when she talked to Kalu Manike. One of my uncles had some special interest in Podina. Once I heard him telling her that she was a black beauty. I think she got into some trouble over his attentions, and then the elder said "foolish cow". Those days we children pretended not to know such things, and elders also behaved as if nothing happened. I never found our real story.

"Tell about your life. Have you passed all the exams in the world? She laughed like the old days. "Not all. But I have managed well. Podina, I always thought about you. But I did not have time to look for you. If I sent you a letter it would have been another problem for you to find someone to read it."

"You don't have to tell me. I knew you wouldn't forget me. Whenever someone goes to Dubai from here I always tell them to look for you"

"Dubai?" "Don't you know... now even village women like me go across the sea. I was also thinking about it. But how can I find moneys to give the agency man? I thought if I go to Dubai, I could meet you as well."

I did not try to explain her that Dubai is small border, and there are many other countries in the world. I did not tell her any of my Pol-sambol stories. Like the chocolate I had brought, Pol-sambol stories also seemed to have become out of place.

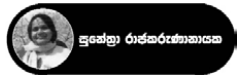
"If we can gulp some rice with salt even once a day that is something. Now it's difficult for everybody. Elder child thought about going to the war. I did not like it even for a moment. But he said, if alive or dead it's money. He says his time is bad so the war also stopped for the time being. Anyway I said a coin, making a vow to God I managed to not let him be selected for the army. What is the use of having money with a dead body? Now, eating or starving, we are together."

Forcing two thousand rupees into Podina's hand, I left her at the grocery store and walked backed to my relative's house. On the same afternoon, I returned to Colombo with a restless feeling.

### Sunethra Rajakarunanyake

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"I collected arcanuts from the other side of the mountain. There is a watery dala there with many arcanut trees grown naturally. Nobody goes there because it's slippery and lots of leeches. But I have to feed seven bellies including myself and the father of the children. So how can I wait until that poor man finds some sork to buy rice? There should be a way to eat even salt and rice"

"Is your man at home? I can give you money to buy rice and other things. You can send him down to buy your provisions."

"There is nothing to see there. Walls of our house got large cracks, and all the trees fall down. Compared to many others we are lucky. At least we still have four cracked walls. Many people can't find the places where they had their houses. Our children's father is not a bad man. These days he drinks heavily because there is nothing to do. He has found a Kithul tree in the mountain and gets today our of that for himself! I just had an argument with him. I told him he could boil some treacle or sell the toddy to someone and buy some flour to make rotl. Poor man... though I shouted at him... I know he needs his toddy. We women can go without food. But man need food and something extra as well."

"She looked pleased with the clothes had brought for her family. The large chocolate bar from the airport duty-free shop looked out of place there. She said she could walk down with me and sell her arcanuts and buy rice, salt, oil and a bundle of beedi, the local variety of cigarettes, for her husband. I carried the bag and she walked behind me balancing her gunny-bag.

She talked nonstop about the old days our father's house. She said that was the only time she had enough to eat.

"Now I regret very much for not learning to read. Now I have to place the thumbprint to get food and landside relief. Anyway it was not like going to a school and learning with the other children. It was difficult for me to hold the pencil after working whole day."

"Once I heard you telling Kalu Manike that there was no use of learning to write long sentences for both of you."

Podina laughed and said, "There is no

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