

Our World

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Stuti Goswami 23 July 2011 9929 views

First Act

(Bhawani is aged 22. Husband Shambhunath is 30. Daughter Senehi is 3 years old. It is nine in the morning. The inner room. Bhawani is lying down on the bed. Shambhu stands nearby.)

Shambhu: But won't you get up today? Its nine already. Time for me to go to Court. But I see no provisions for breakfast?

(*ooh! aah!* Bhawani groans.) What happened? Why do you groan?

(Bhawani groans further) Why don't you say anything? what's happened?

Bhawani: What has happened, nothing. Who takes a note if I live or die? Everyone's concerned simply with eating...eating. *ooh!* Oh Father! *aah--!*

Shambhu: What? Is it fever? Let me see.

(Shambhu sits on the bed beside Bhawani and puts a hand on her waist.)

Bhawani: only this was left *ooh!aah!* ow my!

(Senehi enters)

Senehi: *aai*¹...*o aai*, I'm hungry, gib me tum pood.

(She gets onto the bed and climbs over her mother)

Bhawani: Oh!Oh! Have you come to eat my head as well? Have this--eat—eat my head. The poor woman lies in pain, not able to move even an inch. And here comes everyone bawling over food.

Shambhu: It's all right if you're not feeling well. Just lie down, and take some rest. I'll get you the healing oil from the Bezbaruahs, and the pain will cease. Senehi—come here child, do not disturb your *aai* today; can't you see, she is sick. I'll give you something to eat. Come here.

(Shambhu picks up the crying Senehi and goes out.)

Second Act

(It is 10 in the morning. Main road.)

Ghinaram *Peshkar*²: Isn't that *nokolnobis dangoriya*³? Hello, sir, do wait for me. I'm coming along too. Seems we'll be marked absent today. The Hakim nowadays comes early to the Court.

Shambhu: Oh come on. Do not worry. We won't be marked absent; it's only ten.

Ghinaram: But sir why do you look so worn out? Couldn't you have your bath this morning?

Shambhu: Indeed. My wife is sick you see. Therefore, this morning there was no meal cooked, and I had to come to Court unwashed.

Ghinaram: But will you spend the whole day like this? And that too in this weather? Why didn't you cook a handful of rice for yourself?

Shambhu: I was so busy reading some worthless papers, that I got late, and so couldn't—

Ghinaram: You Brahmins are so tough, just like the *durakaaso*⁴. You can survive for three days even on air. It is us, *sudirs*⁵ who would die of stomach burns even if a single meal is missed. You know, we see the stars. There comes the magistrate. Oh! He's arrived only now.

Third Act

(12 noon. Kitchen. Bhawani is seated beside the *souka*⁶, cooking. Standing nearby, Senehi prattles on)

Senehi: *aai, oi aai*, thit big peet of fich id mine, no *aai*?

Bhawani: Indeed, this big piece of fish is yours. But—let me fry it first; come on don't disturb me.

Senehi: *Oi aai, aai*, look at me *aai*, on't you cook the cully?

Bhawani: Hey, don't blabber on like this, who told you that I won't cook the curry? Umm..move, let me bring down the bottle of oil.

Senehi: *ooo, aai*, litten, why do the lite *kokbok*?

Bhawani: Because the rice boils.

Senehi: No no, becud you pight wid *deuta*⁷

Fourth Act

(The kitchen floor. Bhawani and Senehi eating out of the same dish.)

Senehi: *Oi aai*, do not eat my big peet of fich.

Bhawani: I won't.

Senehi: (crying) *ee..eee* you taid you on't eat and now you eat haap my big peet of fich. *waa...h* . Let *deuta*⁷ come fom coult today, I'll tell im, tell im.

1. *aai*: mother

2. *Peshkar*: clerk

3. *nokolnobis* : copyist; *dangoriya*: sir; a reverent form of address.

4. *durakaaso*: a smaller variety of tortoise

5. *sudir*: lower caste

6. *souka*: an arrangement for cooking, made of earth

7. *deuta*: father

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BY STUTI GOSWAMI

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