

Then I began "Don't misunderstand me, I am only too willing to help her. Meanwhile if the warden comes to know of this he will send me out of the hostel. But this seems rather like asking for trouble all round.

"Prabhu! directly I get up early morning, I shall go and see the warden and settle the matter.

"Raju, you sound like a perfect darling for her."

"So that is settled. Good night, boys."

With this my friends left my verandah; I opened the door quietly and switched on the light.

Oh! I could hear her soft breathing. I didn't want to disturb her. Too many thoughts passed over my mind. I didn't want to lose her. What else can you do!

I passed that night in the ante-room. I didn't know when I fell a sleep. Next morning I got up and saw the warden coming to my room unwillingly. Gopi seeing me from the bathroom shouted at me "Ou! Raju, where is she!"

"Don't be an idiot. Tell us what happened. Word by word."

We went home. Warden started asking me what happened and all that. But when he looked at her, he said "Oh! marvellous! where did you get her?" I said she was loitering near the verandah early in the morning Sir, and so I brought her here for you, Sir. For that he said "Thanks, Raju, I was looking for a male dog. Even then I wouldn't like to lose this animal."

"Oh!, hell! It is only a dog after all!" shouted all around me.

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"DREAM or NOT"

By

K. RAJAGOPALAN

A marriage has been arranged and will shortly take place perhaps it will, but it is not as easy as all that. Even though marriages are sometimes made in Heaven, the details must be filled in by us, poor mortals, on earth. That is why it is important to order the dress, the jewellery, perfumes, flowers, all in good time and of course from the best shops.

In the case of our hero his marriage is celebrated twice in his life with the same girl—once in his dreams and again, if I remember right, in the year 1250, month December, date the 22nd.

Rajan, a young student, a talented actor, an eloquent speaker, the best musician, a gentleman 5 ft. 7½" in height, 140 lbs. in weight, was born in the year 1928 December 22nd, if I remember right, as the heaven-sent son, of Mr. Ramachand, leading advocate of the city.

Mr. Ramchand is a man kind at *heart* and for his *part*, he has his wife Mrs. Chand Bibi, the loveliest of women and affectionate mother among mothers. At the corner of 'Elliot's Road', a beautiful bungalow is situated, surrounded by four walls with creepers of which 'cat-nip' predominates. Inside the compound, the bungalow is situated in a grand manner. The hall is decorated with long colonnades, fretted pillars and scarlet silk hangings. At the centre, in keeping with the fashion of the day, there hangs the tube-light throwing flash and colour. To the right we see the drawing room of Ramchand. The hanging mercury lamp, the never-stopping ceiling fan, three tall bureaus full of law journals and books such as A. I. R., M. W. N., Cr. P. C., etc., a big table covered with serge cloth on which some books, a pencil-pen stand, a book by H. G. Wells, two books on philosophy and a letter pad, rubber stamp etc., are the main features of the room. For Mr. Chand there is one rotating cushion chair such that he can command the whole room and for the guests there are a dozen chairs surrounding the table.

Mr. Chand is deeply engaged in Madras Weekly Notes as he is to argue a case the next day for Miss Ratnamala, a film actress, a good dancer and a budding star, against her mother Mrs. Indra Varmarajan. This Varmarajan is the second husband of Indra, a young man who will resemble—why resemble; looks like as her son.

Mr. Chand is present there, but his mind is in the abode of Mrs. Indra.

At this critical time (in the lover's language) Mrs. Chand enters with a glass of milk, shattering the airy castles of Mr. Chand and says "Which fort are you aiming at? Take some milk first, it will give you some energy". Mr. Chand: "Ho Bibi! I was just thinking about tomorrow's argument. Come and sit here."

Mrs. Chand:— "Baba! What about Rajan? You are not taking care of him nowadays. He is aged enough to be married."

Mr. Chand:— "What? aged! many girls are nowadays still remaining unmarried even at 25. When such is the case what is the hurry for Rajan?"

Mrs. Chand:— "It is not so. My brother won't wait for his daughter's marriage. I intend to celebrate the marriage with Malini, my brother's daughter. What do you say to it?"

Mr. Chand:— "I have no objection, but there is no hurry for the marriage just now."

* * *

If I remember right, in the year 1949 Dec—Oh! what the hell, why should we be particular about dates and days, on a heavenly Christmas vacation. Let us leave it at that. Of course hereafter only our hero Rajan dominates the story. This was the day, a happy day, the day he meets his love, he meets his sweetheart, the day he comes in contact with his better half, his dream beauty, and the day

prominent in the history of India (of course from Rajan's point of view) since it is Rajan's birthday. Perhaps he may attain prominence, in the annals of Indian History; for when his student days are over, is he not to thrill the audience with his voice and acting; is he not to snatch the platform from the chatterboxes of the present day, and revolutionalise the entire face of his dear country. A day previous to his birthday Rajan goes as usual to the Triplicane beach and after spending some time there, he moves towards the Marina canteen to take some light refreshment. He gets in, and goes to a corner from where he can have a view of the beach and its surroundings. He goes and sits in a comfortable chair, but to his great surprise, he sees a vanity bag and a handkerchief on the table. He wants to find out the owner of these two things. He orders plate after plate, drink after drink. An hour passes but no one comes there claiming those two articles.

Rajan now opens the bag and to his great astonishment he sees a card bearing the name—

"Miss Ratnamala,
Dancer & Film Actress,
17, Edward Elliot's Road,
Madras."

and in the backside of it he sees the following details.

Height:— 5' 6".

Weight—137 lbs.

Chest—36"—38".

• Hip—26½.

Age—(blank—as usual in the case of a woman, especially an actress.)

Phone No.—84167.

Car No.—MDU 2525.

Immediately he comes to the box office, that is to say, the proprietor's table of the canteen and takes the phone and rings up no. 84167.

Exchange:— Number please.

Rajan:— 84167. please

Exchange:— Engaged.

Once, twice, and thrice, at intervals of ten, fifteen, and twenty minutes the reply is still engaged. Our fellow Rajan thinks "I'm sure I'll be an old man, by the time I get this number." He goes out of the canteen and makes a careful survey of the cars, seeing the numbers, one after another but there is no car with No. MDU 2525. He loses patience and returns home. On his way at the corner of Pudupet and Elliot's road junction, he sees a car with MDU 2525 with a young and beautiful girl inside it. He walks as fast as he can but as ill-luck would have it the car starts and moves away. When it comes near him, the girl peeps out, smiles, and winks at him. (Here the readers can imagine the personality of Rajan, after coming to know, that a young beautiful girl in her teens, smiles and winks at him.)

Rajan, falls in love with her at first sight and returns home all the way thinking about the girl. He is not quite sure whether she is Ratnamala, or her sister, or friend, or the daughter of Ratnamala (as some actresses take leading roles even at the age of fifty or so), or the neighbour "pesteing" on her car—like some students "pesteing" on other's bikes. He spends the night without peace of mind, or sleep, and with many sighs—in the words of great authors of love stories.

Next day as usual, but an hour earlier, he goes to the beach with tweed suit and evening hat. After sometime he goes to the Marina and to the usual place and orders fruit salad and waits for its arrival. But luck instead of salad, appears in the form of the young girl, who smiled at him the previous day. The girl comes directly to his table, sits in front of him and throws a smile at him. An old woman also follows her and gets seated by her side. She turns towards the old lady and says, "Ayah, ask the server whether he saw my vanity bag and kerchief." Suddenly Rajan replies "Ho! Are you that famous Ratna, and is this your bag? The handkerchief is inside."

Ratna:— "Yes, thank you. May I know your name, please? This lady is my Ayah."

Rajan: "I am a student and the son of an advocate. My name is Rajan."

Ratna:— "Oh! good gracious! If at all I marry, I'll marry only a man like you. I love you (the server comes with the salad and she orders for two more salads, three badam halva, three Delhi Darbar, three Deradun Kitchadi, three Conjeevaram idli, three ice-water, three ovals, three beedas and a packet of Gold Flake with match box. (The last item is for Rajan alone).

The bill comes to Rs. 6—14—0. our young Rajan has got only a five rupee note. But as nature would help him, Ratna pays the bill and they go to another place on the beach. The Ayah is sent home in advance to prepare dinner for Rajan. The love begins like this and Ratna promises to marry. Rajan swoons with delight. That night he tells a lie to his mother that he dined with Rajaram in Park town.

Rajan knows that Ratna is his father's client, but he never tells his father's name to her. The love begins on the Marina and it travels from Adyar to Aminjikarai, Pudupet to Parry's Corner, Midland to Mylapore, Casino to Connemara, Race Course to Radio station. All this takes place in MDU 2525. Every day they meet and every day they part. But the love moves without friction, obstruction or any impediments.

One day when his mother mentioned Malini, her brother's daughter he said "No hurry, for my marriage, mother, I will marry only after my education is over." But he never tells any one of his love towards Ratna and the proposal for their future marriage. Ratna also does not know that he is her advocate's son.

Rajan's mother also met Ratna many times and had talks with her. She appreciated her talents, beauty, and envied her wealth and every time Ratna come, Rajan's mother used to sigh "Why can't she be my daughter-in-law. She is not like other actresses."

One fine evening, Rajan dresses to go to the Marina. A car comes and stops in front of his house, the same MDU 2525. Our hero runs inside and hides himself. Ratna comes in and garlands his father; both smile at each other. Rajan could hear only some words case . . . success laughter father shakes hands with her. . . . Rajan with a suspicious look, comes in. She runs away, he cries "Ratna! Ratha! Ratna!"

Now the door of Rajan's bedroom opens. Mother says "Hallo! Bapu! Bapu! What is all this! You were dreaming, is it not? Who is Ratna? Rajan gets up from the bed and reveals everything about his dream and his love towards Ratna. Mother also feels glad over it on hearing that Ratna is ready to marry him. Father also feels proud of himself that he is garlanded by Ratna over the success of the case. No doubt the case is a critical one. So any lawyer can be proud of himself.

Next day morning, Mrs. Bibi urges Mr. Chand to go to Ratna's house and fix up the marriage. Father goes to her house but she refuses to marry his son, since she has already consented to marry another. Father returns home and tells his wife everything. On hearing this Rajan cries "Rogue, traitor, let her die. Let her art seek the burial ground."

The same day evening, Ratna dresses herself and goes to the beach but is disappointed to see no trace of Rajan. So she has to return home. On the way, she goes to the lawyer's home. At that time Mr. and Mrs. Lawyer are discussing about sending Rajan to England at the end of the year. Rajan is upstairs.

Mr. & Mrs. Lawyer welcome Ratna much against their will. Ratna takes up the album kept on the table and on seeing a photo of Rajan, cries "Ho! Rajan, you are here," and she turns to the lawyer and him how he managed to get a picture of Rajan, to which the lawyer answers, "He is my son".

Ratna:— What? Rajan, your son! You are then my father-in-law. I did not know, you were his father She runs inside crying "Rajan; Rajan!"

Rajan comes down and enters his father's room. On seeing her he turns back, but Ratna rushes towards him and catches hold of him saying "What Rajan, you never told me that my lawyer is your father. This is the reason for your misunderstanding. Rajan, I will marry you. Please do not leave me."

Now the hero smiles. The marriage date is fixed as December. 22nd, the birthday of Rajan. He goes back to his college at Coimbatore. He is eagerly waiting for December 22nd.

Rajan one day after seeing Ratna's recent picture, returns to the hostel, and sleeps. * * *

"The marriage celebration is going on in Ratna's bungalow on a grand scale with an expenditure of many lakhs, under the immediate presence of Hon'ble Ministers and prominent personalities in all walks of life. Athangudi Srinivasa Iyer's musical performance is going on, to be followed by Malli and Suppi dance. During this, Rajan sees Ratna and says—"Dear Ratna! Ratna!—Ratna! Now ... "Dai Raju! what Ratna! she will come only after December 22nd. Fool! get up, you fellow, you lazy brinjal, the time is 6-30. We have got our class at 7 A.M. Get up you pumpkin" Seenu cries.

(Of course, now it is clear that Ratna's marriage is a dream, even though the marriage between them is sure. Long live the couple, Ratna—Rajan).

Rajan gets up from his bed and says to Seenu, his room mate, "Dear Seenu, it is only a dream.

Let it be true, whether dream or not

Oh! God".

Rajan goes to the bathroom to wash his face and clean his teeth.

“MARY'S NEGLIGENCE”

By

J. CHANDRA MOHAN, B. A.,

I was pedalling back home rather slowly, late in the evening, that day when Gopi stopped me in front of the Ideal Cafe and took me inside, much against my will. We were soon engrossed in chatting over a cup of coffee. It was very late before I could resume biking.

My house stood well back from the main road but quite close to an obscure lane. I always use the back way, entering from the lane, when the wife is at home. But to-night I should have entered the house by the front door because she had gone to one of her social meetings in the Women's Club. I always carry the front door key, with me but tonight suddenly I remembered and turned in my tracks, only to stop again I heard the voice, rather a deep voice it was, and it came from the house!!