

I just ran to school, covering my shoulder with the saree and hiding my tears. Though we lived in one house, Sithanga talks to me only if there was something to be done by me. In front of society we are a loving married couple. But, inside my mind I was a hapless creature burning in a fire pit. I looked at the gloomy sky. It was similar to my life, dull and gloomy. Suffering, pain, tears characterized my life.

I saw suffering in every corner within these four walls. Whenever I got even a little late to wake up, Sithanga beat me. Sometimes he burned me with the cigarettes he used to smoke. In such situations, he screamed saying, that he doesn't love me and I clawed everything from him. He screamed that he wouldn't let me go and would take revenge on me and only keep me for my money. Each time I cried inside my heart questioning why he was doing this to me.

Sithanga was a brutal, heartless man. Whenever he hurt me, I thought how my life would be, if my fate didn't mock me. If I could have married Abhiman, my life could have been filled with happiness, smiles and love, because he was the only man I ever loved in my life.

I, Akshara, was Abhi's Akshu. I was considered innocent and quiet by most of my friends. But, in front of Abhiman, I was the most mischievous girl in this world.

One day I was on the way home with Abhiman after school,  
"Give me your wallet..."

I pulled the wallet away from his hand.  
"One day you will make me a beggar."  
Abhiman responded in a teasing tone expecting to annoy me and let me use his wallet. I ran to the nearest shop with it and bought tea and a packet of biscuits.

He knew that I bought all those for the poor grandmother who was near the bus halt. Abhiman was standing near the wall smiling while I offered the food to the old granny. I loved that sweet smile a lot. "Aww" I spilled the hot tea on my hand, distracted by his loving eyes. He rushed towards me and wiped off the hot-tea on my hand.

"You are being careless!"

"Abhi, it is nothing. Don't worry."

"I was so frightened Akshu."

He just lifted my chin and held my hand next to his heart. His proud eyes looked worried on my behalf. Does he love me that much?

I was a chemistry teacher at my school. Most of the time, though I had money I used to help the poor with Abhiman's money wishing that all those good deeds would help him one day.

Though it has been six months since I married Sithanga, we lived in two rooms. Whenever my father came to visit us, he would come to my room in order to show him that he loved me, but then it made me rather anxious to live in such close proximity to him.

I had to breakup with Abhiman because of my father. My mother died when I was two years old and it was my father who did everything for me. His dislike for Abhi was unwavering. I could have no second thoughts and chose to be a person without a heart and a soul. I stood with my father letting every happiness in my life leave out for good. I never told my father about Sithanga and his harassment as I knew that he would never believe me. So, I let him throw my life at a rascal. That evening Sithanga came towards me saying,  
"Get ready, I have a friend's homecoming,"