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Without You

Mr. Senarath shed tears for a while. He was at the corner of the enormous hall overwhelmed by sad and lonely feelings though he was among hundreds of people around. "We were searching for you" someone said, "It's time for us to leave" another person said. He looked far out through the glass wall. He didn't look at the people who talked with him, instead he nodded his head.

He saw some birds fly away, as he was looking through the glass panels. He remembered the day his one and only child was born. "Time runs very fast. How can I stop! No one can stop," he thought. Suddenly the light went out and within a few second it came. He wanted to smash everything. He went into the wash room and washed his face, so that he could hide his tears. He peeped into the mirror to check whether the others could see his tears. How could he hide them?

"Tears cheat me and leap from the eyes easily," he thought.

He came to the present world when someone patted him.

"What are you doing here? Almost all the people have gone," the stranger asked.

The stranger took him to the hall. Most of the people had left and others were getting ready to go. A few were eager to get away; they just wait to see the departure of the couple. The couple was ready to depart. His one and only companion came to him. He couldn't breathe properly. He felt as if there was something like a lump in his throat. His daughter too was shedding tears like a lamb. The sky was clear in the morning. But, now it was about to fall. How it changed so fast! His mind went to the past. He could still remember the day. It was a rainy day almost twenty four years ago. How could it be forgotten? Since morning it was a sunny day. And suddenly it began to rain from the evening. He had just come after work when it began to rain. His wife was in a somewhat difficult situation and she was pregnant, the embryo was almost eight months. Both of them were waiting to welcome the new baby the following month. Suddenly the condition of the wife was critical and they decided to go to the hospital.

The nearest hospital was a few kilometers away. Finally she was admitted to the hospital. Within a few hours her condition aggravated. So she was observed at the ETU and immediately she was transferred to a base hospital nearby. He too was able to go in the ambulance. She was done an emergency surgery. He, the husband was outside the large building and the theater was there in the second floor of the building. He was sitting on a bench all the

while overtaken by tension; everything that happened was like a horrible nightmare. He was aimlessly walking here and there. He was so lonely. Lighting continued. Suddenly thunder burst. He heard several times a cry of a baby, but when he listened more keenly, no sound could be heard. The Wind blew, thunder flashed, the hospital staff was busy with things. While waiting outside he went to the entrance of the theater several times. He turned back after reading the notice on the door "staff only". This time he even thought of knocking at the door like earlier. But this time when he went to the door, someone came outside from the theater in a green gown. The person was wearing a surgical mask, gloves and white shoes. No one could identify whether the person was male or female. "You may be Samanmalee's husband", she asked.

"Yes, I am" he replied. "How is my wife?"

Then a machine with a glass box was taken out from the theater and there was a little baby wrapped with a flannel cloth. Some wires and clips had been fixed.

"This is she." a doctor who was wearing a green gown with a stethoscope hanging around her neck said in a low voice. When she spoke, he, the father saw hope in those words, but some gloom he could sense behind her eyes and the whole environment.

"Where is my wife," he raised his voice.

They took the baby away saying that the baby was being taken to the PBU. Following them another doctor came. He was asked to sit and the doctor too sat in a nearby chair.

"How is she doctor? She is in a good condition, isn't she?" he asked.

The doctor did not answer him directly. "We have to take the baby to PBU and have to keep her there for a week or two."

Then she looked at him, "Who is there at your home," she asked.

"I and my wife," he said.

"Her mother will be coming next week to stay with us, as my wife needs her now," he added.

"I am so sorry," the doctor said.

"Why, why did you say so, doctor?" he asked.

"She had tolerated the pain for a long time," the doctor sighed.

"What happened to my wife? where is she?"

"I'm sorry Mr. We couldn't save her."

"What, what did you say?, I need to see her, let me see her," he stammered.

A minor staff member came pushing a trolley. In it was a silver box like a coffin.

"You were in deep thought," someone tapped him on the back and said.

He wiped his tears and turned to the person who tapped him.

"The couple is going to leave."

Today she leaves me, leaves me forever. The little baby who came in a glass box now flies away. He sighed. His little bird came with her new care taker. Both of them came and worshiped him. He hugged his little bird and shed tears for a minute. Later he sat on the steps and shed tears for hours.