

H Says

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Story of Pran and Ragini and their missing son as told in the voice of a good friend of the family.

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I met Ragini at a wedding .. her wedding infact.

Her father shared that he had been looking for a suitable match for ten years now. Post ten years of extensive search Ragini's marriage has been fixed to a man from South Delhi. His photo indicated a handsome facia, upon meeting Ragini felt 'yes this was the man she was waiting for. Her father ended the conversation with 'Finally!' Her mother showed the gold chain she had made for the goddess in the neighbourhood temple.

I was the groom's good friend from his locality, infact I was and am a good friend to a number of people. I wonder if my father had not passed away early I would not be this nice and patient to everyone and would be more spoilt. But then perish that thought.

Now friends, if you think Ragini 'the bride of that day- as ugly or dull for the ten years of extensive search her parents did for her groom, then let me tell you a big NO. She was lovely and intelligent. When I met her at the wedding reception as an invitee of the groom, I had this strange feeling of wanting to tell her about Pran. Pran 'the groom was 32, handsome, charming, well versed, athletic and thats it. All his earlier relationships with opposite gender had started with a lot of pomp .. to disappear in smoke. In no situations were he to blame, yet I never cared about those girls, Ragini seemed so different.

But then good friends of grooms don't go and tell tales to brides on apparent observations.

Ragini's marriage started well. She was nothing if not completely devoted, dedicated and focused. Those days they would make a starling couple. Both so fair, tall and lovely. The baby boy they had post one year of their marriage looked straight out of a greeting card and had inherited Ragini's grand mother's grey eyes. They called him Mohit.

Invited to the child's first birthday, I saw Pran look younger than before with a smile that would have floored any woman if he had eyes for them. But Pran had eyes only for his wife. When he spoke, it was only about his wonderful wife. In that birthday party, Ragini shared that she wanted the father and son to bond without her in between.

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It was six months from then that Mohit was lost .. never to be found again. Breaking all hearts around .. but most of all Pranâ s as he could not accept that his baby would leave him.

Post ten years of dedicated effort at thirty eight, Ragini packed her bags and picked up her five year old daughter, packed the photographs of the son she had lost when her husband had just let the toddler toddle away on his own, while he was busy shaking hands with an old friend and catching up about their lives. Pranâ s explanation later on was that he waited two full hours on that spot for the baby to come back to him and did not move an inch. I know he still goes there often and looks for toddlers.

Why the marriage did not break then, why post so many years did she walk away are questions meant for the lady who was not there any more. I had stopped going to their house as the topic of Mohit would come up and eat me inside out.

I knew that Ragini believed that Mohit was alive and being looked after by a good and prosperous family who could not return as her child at one and a half he had not yet learnt to speak. I also believed the same. Even the locket which the child was wearing that day carried an â Hâ , as his grandmother liked to call him Hari.

When Pran had realized that his wife and daughter had left, he in the characteristics manner of his stayed put for some five years, ever believing that they will be back. Then one fine morning came to me and bid his farewell and left. I wanted to but was not able to seek his destination.

I had no touch with them till one fine morning I met a lovely girl of about twenty two knocking at my door. She had this determined look on her face which I had seen so many years back on the face of a beautiful bride. â My pet name is Pari and my mother is Ragini.â was her greeting to me. As I was trying to come in terms with this sudden visit, she came inside the room took a look and came immediately to the point. She wanted a signature for a local referral without which her prospective land lord were not willing to handover the keys to her. Yes she is working and no her mother is not with her but has referred her to me, her old friend. I had so many questions, but the only thing I did was give a signature with all my details. She was in a hurry and gave me her mobile number and promised a visit soon. I remember she casually enquired if I had met Pran recently. She checked if my family is inside, to which I elaborated that my wife and son had died at childbirth long before she was born and I have been alone since then. The number she had scrolled on paper had an extra digit. After some twenty wrong numbers by doing various permutation and combination I had to finally give up .. Its been some years since that morning and she has not contacted me again, neither has her landlord called.

I like to imagine that she discovered Pran and installed him back to his wife. They both did love each other a lot.

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This little narration of mine will be incomplete if I do not tell you all about the thing which happened yesterday. I had an invitation â I seem to get a lot of them even now. The groom was a boy called Haavard almost a photocopy of Pran.. a taller, fairer version with light greyish eyes and an athletic build. He had a firm handshake and a direct manner.. so much like Ragini.

I so much wanted to extend the conversation with the boy.. ask him if he was adopted.. if yes, was he originally from India, from Delhi. Did the agency that handled the adoption give the boy to a good family? How was his childhood? Does he have a sister there in Denmark? A mother like Ragini... And where was Pran ? My beloved friend who had mistakenly bought a wrong blood group from the blood bank to an incompetent hospital that did not test it.

But he was speaking English with an accent - a Danish accent as the brideâs father elaborated to someone nearby. There was also a certain harshness on his face that was similar to Pari. He and the bride had met in Paris. An old man from the neighbourhood does not approach the groom to ask personal questions. I can not remember if the agency handling the adoption of Mohit had Danish counterparts. My memory fails me after so many years ..

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