

It's a story of a Brahmin gal who loved a non-Brahmin and due to fathers compulsion married a Brahmin guy and leading a perfect life with little happiness!!

This may be a story written in a contest, but the content, characters and

the sentences of the story were "Heart Throbbing" and "Breath Taking"...

Please do read it completely, it takes around 15 mins... But, I say, its really worth reading this story... This may even lead to a change of attitude or the character or the mindset in you, in the future... Given below are the letters by the daughter to her father.

Dearest Appa,

27th Jan'1965

Hope this letter finds you, Amma, Raji and Seenu in good health. The

weather here in New York City is icy cold. But Avar sollraar- I have

missed this winter's biting cold. I still wish I had seen the snow...

But then, I still wish I had not left Trichy at all. I do miss

Trichy, Appa. You, Amma, Raji, Seenu, pakkatthaathu Rama, Vikatan,

Ucchi Pillaiyaar Koil, filter coffee, Holy Cross College, the Physics

Department and of course Sakthi. I know you wish I hadn't brought his

name in this letter. But not to worry Appa, I understand that you got

me married to Visu because you thought it was best for your daughter.

I still remember Amma wiping her silent tears with her madisaar

thalappu and you shouting at me the day I told you about Sakthi.

Later, when the initial shock wore off you patiently listed umpteen

reasons why I should not marry Sakthi. I agree Appa, that 20 is too

young to decide, that Raji and Seenu would have been affected greatly by my 'mistake', the Agrahaaram would have scoffed at you... a meat eater was not a good match for someone who had never even tasted onion and garlic. The reasons were innumerable. I knew you'd still have objected and offered other reasons even if he had become a Dhigambara monk. Visu on the other hand, wore a ponal, he is the son of Neelakanta Sastri, an Engineer and he researched about computers which is what made you jump for this alliance. Am not complaining Appa, Visu is a nice man.

Tell Amma that I could not try her kozhakkattai recipe this Pongal because coconuts were too expensive and Avar nenacchar that it was ridiculous. Anyway, we went out on Sankaranthi day and dined out. He thought it would be a good idea to invite the Chatterjees also. But I didn't speak Bengali and Mrs.Chatterjee spoke English in an accent that comes with living years in America. Hence I made myself busy with the menu card. They ordered various species of fish,shrimp and a lot more of items I had never seen in my life. I ordered orange juice and a sandwich. The other diners thought it was queer coming to a seafood restaurant and settling for a sandwich. That day, I learnt that Avar prefer pannradhu beef, pork, bacon and seafood. Do you know, Appa... Sakthi gave up meat because of me? I didn't ask, he just did. But then, Sakthi is not Neelakanta Sastri's son and that made it impossible for Subramania Iyer's daughter Kalyani to marry him.

I will keep you posted on what happens here. I don't think I can make it to Seenu's Upanayanam. Tell Amma not to get me a pattu podavai for the poonal, I don't use them here. I wore it once and felt like a clown here.

Your loving daughter,

Kalyani.

Dearest Appa,

20th Oct'1968

We are fine here. Gautam is speaking his first words and I swear they sounded like 'Dosai'. But Visu claims it's just gibberish. From your previous letter, I gather that pakkathatthu Rama is married and settled in Jamshedpur. Nice to know that. Please find out her address from Saarada maami and write it to me. I want to keep in touch with her. I hope Raji is happy with her husband in Madras. I spoke to her last month, great to know that she has a phone. Do tell Seenu to study well and prepare for his school final exams. Raji also told me that Sakthi is married now. I wish him good luck, but I could not convey the message to him. Raji refused to be the messenger and I know you have severed ties with Sakthi's father, your long term friend Sankaravel, thanks to me. I hear his wife is his cousin... He must have succumbed to his mother's wishes.

How did Avani Avittam go? Visu's mother gave me a bunch of new

poonals for Avani Avittam but Visu was in Boston that day. He wouldn't have used it anyway, I haven't seen him wear one in the last three years. Gautam is now playing with the spool of thread- mere thread it is, what else can I call it? Gautam will not even know what it signifies, I guess. Visu is making sure Gautam grows up listening to English only. He says it will make his life easier. But I do read out passages from Ponnaiyin Selvan and Bharathiyar's poetry when I am alone with him. It's more of reading to myself, I guess. I actually got that poetry book as a present from Sakthi, it still has his scrawling signature in the first page.

By the way, Visu saw that book and asked me about Sakthi, I told him.

Hold your breath Appa, he didn't throw me out of the house. He is a good man, no question. He said it is okay and that he doesn't mind.

And then he told me of his American girlfriend whom he was once in love with, when he first reached America- Amy, a fellow Researcher who was in a brief relationship with Visu when she was in New York.

They lived together for 3 months and decided against marriage, somehow. Amy once dropped home when she was in New York. Nice lady, she was.

Ask Amma to send me Sambar Podi for this whole year. My friend Sudha is coming to Madras next week. Ask Seenu to catch the Rockfort Express and give it to her. I will collect it from her here.

Your loving daughter,

Kalyani.

Dearest Appa,

3rd June'1974

We have arrived here safely. After two months in India, I find it hard to adjust back to normal life here. Gautam and Ranjana demand vadai, paayasam and vaazhai ilai here. Visu's relieved to be back in America. I left a set of my books there. If it's not in Trichy it must be in Visu's parents' place. If you find them, safeguard them until my next trip. They mean a lot to me since they were gifts from Sakthi. By the way, Appa, I found out Sakthi's present address in Madras from Rama and Saarada maami. I wrote to him. I am extremely proud to know that Dr.Sakthivel is a cardiologist much in demand there in Madras. He was thrilled to hear from me after so long. You know what he has named his daughters? Kalyani and Raagamaalika. He called me. You know what, he's still a practising vegetarian, Appa. He didn't revert back just because he lost me... He asked me if I still sang and whether Gautam and Ranjana could sing. I could see a proud father in him, when he claimed his daughters could sing upto Ra ra Venu Gopala. That's when I remembered that I was once a good singer. I wonder why I stopped singing, wonder why I never exposed the kids to Music and Dance. But then, I realize that I had buried

all that deep inside me when I left Trichy; after bidding farewell to my best Rasika, actually. Sakthi. After the call, I tried singing 'Kurai Onrum Illai'. I could not quite reach Charanam, because of the lack of practice and more importantly because of the tears that filmed my eyes and the constriction in my throat. I sang to Visu and the kids one of these days. Though Gautam was impressed, father and daughter could not just wait for me to finish!

By the way, next time some friend comes to India, send me a Sruthi Box. I would like to start singing again.

Your loving daughter,

Kalyani.

Dearest Appa,

14th Aug 1978

Just back after our tour to California. Find our photos, picture postcards attached herewith. After you are done with showing all family members, relatives, friends and neighbours, pass them to Visu's parents. It was a welcome break for the four of us. But I missed my paattu class students all along and was happy to resume the classes again last evening. Did I mention in my previous letter, before we left on the tour - I finally got my driving license here. I sent a few photos to Sakthi too. He has sent me quite a few records and cassettes. I loved it! I'm reminded of AIR, almost! I'm circulating them among my friends too. And of course, playing them for my

students too. They are picking up beautifully. Funny news is, I, a TAMILIAN, is teaching Telugu and Sanskrit kriti to a cross section of Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, Bengali students in an English speaking nation.

The music sessions have resulted in a reborn Kalyani, Appa. Thanks to Sakthi, really. I would have never taken it up had it not been for his reminder. I am now thinking of what life would have been like if I had indeed married him. I would have of course lost you and Amma. But right now, with this life in America, Visu and these monthly letters to you, Rama, Raji and Seenu what have I gained? I don't find an answer, Appa. Neither do I think I ever will. Again, as I have always reiterated, Visu is a good man, no complaints there. He is every bit the son in law you wanted. Researcher, American Post Graduate Degree holder, a dutiful husband and father, earning a comfortable income. I know it is too much to ask for anything else. That is a fantasy I left midway in my life... Once upon a time in Trichy with someone else.

Your loving daughter,

Kalyani.

Dearest Appa,

14th Apr' 1984

Met Dr. Sakthivel after 19 years... He had come to

New York for business purposes and paid me a visit. Visu and the kids welcomed him home with great pleasure. And they liked him too. In fact, they did most of the talking initially. And of course, he got me a whole load of books, cassettes, Mysore Paak and lots more.

Your loving daughter,

Kalyani.

Dearest Appa,

20th Jan' 1990

I just went through all these letters lying in my closet draw for years together. These are letters I started writing to you and then decided not to post. For obvious reasons. I could not mention Sakthi to you even though I was itching to. Not because I was afraid to invite your wrath. I just did not have the heart to hurt you, I know these letters would have hurt you. Because deep inside, I know you were disturbed- you knew Sakthi was a good man, you knew he was a man of substance, yet you didn't want to go further. Society, I know. Family... I know... And all these letters would have only wounded you more. Today, 2 years after your death, and 6 months after Dr. Sakthivel's untimely death in a road accident, I somehow felt like re-reading all these letters. To me, all these unstamped, unposted letters mean a life that could have been.

Kalyani Viswanathan.

