



Dondapati Srilaxmi

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Chapter 1

I woke up at 5.30 A.M. by our Aunt (my mother's younger sister) shouting. The sun, which illuminates the world, is still hiding behind the clouds, but it turned white already at 5.00 A.M. for my Aunt. I want to stay in bed for a while, but have to get up or she will keep screaming to be heard at the end of the street. Sadly, our Uncle (her husband) said many times that he never slept until 7.00 P.M. even once after they got married. I got up and was ready to go jogging. Chintu is doing homework in the hall, Uncle seems to be in the bathroom, and Aunt rushes to the kitchen to prepare breakfast. Madhu was ready as soon as I took the main door and came out. Near the gate, Karthik was also standing next to her.

Madhu: Come fast Anju, Isn't there an exam today? Let's go for a quick jog and revise one more time.

Me: Coming ... I do remember.

A howl was heard from behind that 'I am coming too, wait'. That's Jagat's voice. We were all talking and jogging together, Karthik was not saying anything, I slipped by the leg and fell, Karthik grabbed my hand and stopped.

IF SILENCE SPEAKS

Jagat: ‘Careful! Anju, I cannot lift you home if your leg is bent’ he said laughing.

Madhu: You don’t have to, Karthik can easily pick up Anju.

Me: ‘Sir is angry with me still?’ I looked at Karthik’s face and he still closed his mouth, not saying anything.

Jagat: It looks like the ‘Cold War’ is running in between you two. What happened?

Karthik: “There is nothing wrong with really fighting,” he said angrily.

Me: At 9.30 last night. Me and Madhu went to have pani poori chat, three guys made us tease there, then Karthik came as a hero, clashed with them and scolded us, and brought us home and not spoken to me since.

Karthik: Is it necessary to go alone all night? Would I not bring it if you asked me?

Madhu: Anju also said the same, but I took her forcibly, there is nothing wrong with Anju.

Jagat: Oh! So... the story and the direction is yours madam Madhu???

I grabbed Karthik’s hand and said, “Sorry, I won’t do that again please, I will buy you ice cream, if you want.”

Karthik: I don’t want it. Just be careful.

Me: ‘OK sir’.

There was a smile on Karthik’s face again and I felt relaxed. This is how he defended me many times in which sometimes even if it was my fault he would not scold me,

he couldn't be without talking for a long time and he would continue to fight with me about something again, I don't know why. The two of us get into fights at least ten times a day, he makes me cry, I make him cry, most of the time I get angry. Everyone who casts their eyes upon us, calls us "Tom and Jerry". I never called him Bava even though he was a Brother-in-law to me. I studied in Vizag till Intermediate and it's our both hometown. Now, came to Hyderabad for graduation. Karthik, who is one year older than me, came here to do medicine. We live and study in the same house of Aunt & Uncle along with Chintu (their L.K.G. son). Uncle works in the Bank, both of them are very nice people and Aunt is a little bit of strictness, should every work happen by the time.

We went back home quickly, studied for a while, and hurriedly got ready for college when our aunt yelled at us to come to eat breakfast.

Me: Coming! Aunt.

Chintu: Maa! I want a balloon-like puree.

Aunt: Ha! Eat this. Anju! today, I cooked what you liked, I put the same in the box. Eat well, don't bring it back as I packed.

Me: So sweet of you Aunt... Thanks, I can't eat those boring vegetables every day.

Aunt: 'What?' She asked angrily.

Me: Nothing.... I'm saying whatever you did is good.

IF SILENCE SPEAKS

Uncle: ‘Yes! Very good to see. But it’s hard to eat’ he said, and we both laughed.

Meanwhile, Karthik came down from his room in the terrace and sat on the chair next to me.

Aunt: I cook so hard, both of you are crooked. You both cook tomorrow, How do you like it Karthik?

Karthik: Very good Aunt (Mother-in-law) super!!! But it would be better to add salt too.

Aunt tasted a little and said ‘Really! salt is not enough’, we all laughed out loud.

Karthik fed me a piece of Puri and said ‘Sorry honey, I shouted so much yesterday on you, can’t you tell Madhu took you out?’

Me: You didn’t give me the chance to say.

Uncle: Fighting all day, apologizing on the morning, both of you seem to be well accustomed.

Aunt: Karthik! Anju wants to go shopping in the evening, I have to go to next door to my aunt’s house, so you take her to the Shopping mall.

Karthik: Shopping with this monster! I can’t. She searches a hundred shops to buy a single Kerchief.

Me: Well! Today, I will buy Chudidar, not Kerchief.

Karthik: Chudidaaar.... God! save me.

Uncle: Before women buy a single saree, we can buy enough clothes for the whole year.

Aunt: How can we buy clothes without looking back and front? Karthik you take her to Mall, that's it.

He admitted that he had gone no other way but, in fact, he would come with me though Aunt did not say, he didn't like sending me alone at all. We both go to college on his bike. My college is ahead of his college, his duty is to drop me off every day. Madhu falls on Scooty. Jagat studies in another College.

Karthik: Have you well prepared for the exam?

Me: Yeah! I revised everything, but there was a bit of tension Karthi.

Karthik: Don't panic, write what you remember. Otherwise, write in the next exam.

Me: Wow! How well you said...

Karthik: Follow my words, you will grow better.

Me: Hey.... Stop the bike, Stop the bike, I forgot my pen box.

Karthik: I know you will forget, I brought it, here it is.

Me: Thanks Ra.

As soon as we reached, Madhu is already waiting for me at the gate, Karthik left saying all the best to both of us. I, Madhu, and four other friends went into the exam hall together. Madhu takes more tension than me much she has been read hard this time that Marks did not come properly in the last exam. We finished the exam at one o'clock and all came out.

IF SILENCE SPEAKS

Me: Madhu! isn't the question paper easy? How did it go?

Madhu: Easy for you may be, but I found it difficult. However, I did it well this time.

Archana: I did not write well, I will fail this time too.

Me: Don't worry, September is thereby March...

Archana: If I go home my father will be there, he won't wait till September, I am tensed!

Ramya: What's your tension Archana, even you are not happy that the exams are over? Let's all go to the movie.

Me: Yes, good idea.

We all have lunch in the canteen and went to the theater in Auto. I told Karthik in a Phone call how I write the exam, even about our film program. He told me to be careful and he said he will pick up me at the time the movie finished. Karthik was at the gate when we came out after the movie ended.

Me: Okay! I have to go shopping, Karthik and I are going together, will you come too?

Madhu: I will go home, I have a headache.

Archana, Ramya also went home. Me and Karthik left from there on bike. He parked the bike in front of the shopping mall and went inside and saw many dresses but I didn't like any of them, all the same designs are just different in color. Karthik stares at the sales girl beside me.

Me: Can you help me a little, if you don't stare like an owl?

Karthik: You help me a little, that girl is very beautiful, can you find her phone number?

Me: I'll find, if you sideways and wait.

He left and after a while came in with a pink dress to show me how it was, I loved it.

Me: Very Nice! But the rate is high, is the money enough?

Karthik: I have them. If you like it, take it.

Me: Okay, let's take this.

He has paid the bill and asked while riding the bike, "Did the girl give the number? "I took it but, it's her husband's number she doesn't have a mobile" his face turned into tomato red and I laughed for a long time". Meanwhile, Aunt phoned to say that my father had come home to take me to Vizag for the holidays, which made me very happy. Dad was confronted in the doorway of the house, I got off the bike and ran to Dad.

Me: Daddy..... How are you? When did you arrive? How is Maa?

Dad: Everyone is good, How are you? How did you write the exams?

Me: Well done Daddy.

Karthik: How are you Uncle (Father-in-Law)?

Dad: Haa! How are you Karthik? It's been a long time to see you, Are you coming to Vizag too?

IF SILENCE SPEAKS

Karthik: No Uncle! I have practical exams.

Aunt: Why all of you standing outside! Come on in, have a seat and enjoy snacks!

Dad told me that we are leaving for the bus tomorrow morning. Chintu took my Duppata and ran upstairs while I was packing clothes, I ran behind him. Karthik looks up at the sky and thinking about something like a hero in the movie.

Me: Hey! catch him Karthik...

Chintu: You can't catch me....

Karthik grabbed Chintu, he tried to flee for a long time and finally left my dupatta as I offer him chocolate.

Karthik: Give it to her soon, your sister seems to be in a hurry to leave.

Me: Yes! I can escape from you for few days.

Karthik: Oh! I too can escape without seeing your monkey face. Leave quickly.

I went downstairs and packed my bag, slept all night by having fun with Chintu. In the morning while we are leaving, all the friends on the street came to say bye to me but, Karthik was nowhere to be seen.

Chapter 2

I spent a month comfortably by eating all the dishes that my mother made, went to the relatives' house, I talked to Aunt and Uncle two or three times in the middle, even with friends, but Karthik did not pick up the phone, I tried many times, I got angry finally and stopped doing it. I boarded the Hyderabad train again with the sweets, pickles, and pretzels that my mother had adjusted. On the train, one uncle lying in the next berth was snoring and I couldn't sleep. I got off the train at Secunderabad station at 6.00 A.M.. I am waiting for Uncle who usually picks up me but, Karthik appeared while I am sitting on the platform.

Karthik: Hi! How are you, honey?

Me: 'Good! How are you?' he didn't attend any of my calls but, now talking with a smiley face, I thought.

Karthik: What is this much luggage? Did you pack the whole Vizag and put it in the bag? Hold this one bag.

Me: Maa put all your favorite sweets in bags. So you have to carry everything by yourself.

IF SILENCE SPEAKS

Karthik: No matter how many bags of sweets made by your mom, I love to eat all. Let's go to Auto stand.

Me: Auto? Didn't bring the bike?

Karthik: Uncle estimated your luggage already and told me to go in the Auto.

As soon as I got home, Chintu came by running towards me, I picked him up and kissed him. The aunt was cooking Pulihora for me. The smell hit my nose in the doorway.

Uncle: Come Anju! if you don't be, the whole house will be boring.

Aunt: Yes! Karthik is also dull all these days, it would be good for us if you two were beating up like Tom and Jerry at home.

I saw Karthik's face, he immediately turned his head. I came into the hall after taking a bath. Karthik and Chintu were eating all the sweets together on the sofa, Karthik loves sweets and he doesn't need any other food if he had sweets in his hand. He eats like a kid.

Me: How are they?

Karthik: Very tasty... amazing...

Me: Have you been so busy?

Karthik: Busy? No, just watching movies with friends and having fun.

I hit him with the sofa cushion and said, "Why Didn't you call me for one time, monkey?"

Karthik: I thought you must be busy.

Me: Oh! Then how did I call you, if I am busy?

Karthik: “Let me eat first Anju and beat me later, I give you a whole day permission” I said ‘go away’ and walked out angrily. When I went to upstairs to take the clothes in the evening, Karthik shouted from my behind to scare me but I ignored him.

Karthik: Are you still angry Sweet heart? take your favorite chocolate and forgive me...

Me: ‘I don’t need it’ he took my hand and gave me the chocolate.

Karthik: ‘I am really sorry honey... please’ he made a puppy face.

Me: It’s okay.

We sat there for a long time and talked about what we had done these days. We realize with the call of our Aunt, it was dark and we went downstairs for dinner. I do not understand why I don’t know care the time when I talk to him, no matter how angry I am it will fly away, but, one thing I don’t understand is that every time when I go home he avoids me and never talk to me until I return and he escapes without saying the reason.

College started after two days, I met all the friends again, Madhu came from her relative’s home yesterday, all the friends in the colony were playing cricket together on Sunday, Karthik and me were opponents.

IF SILENCE SPEAKS

Jagat: If our team wins today, I will take everyone to the movie.

Madhu: You say the same thing every time, but never take us.

Jagat: 'If I take you, you will empty my purse, I will take Anju' he turned to me and said 'Anju you have to do a century today and everyone should flat for you'.

Karthik: What are you asking for a century? If she hits 10 runs that's more than enough.

Me: You keep watching Karthik, I will not leave without scoring a century today...

Karthik: Let's see, hold that bat properly first.

Sudheer is bowling, Karthik is fielding, I and Madhu are batting, the match has started. We two made a half-century together. Meanwhile, Madhu was run out and Jagat came to bat.

Jagat: Anju, let's get more runs, is it okay to run for every ball for you?

Me: Okay! I can run.

Karthik: Don't run too fast Anju, you will fall. Be careful.

Jagat: Don't listen to him, they are planning to defeat us.

While Shashank was bowling, Jagat hit the ball, we both were running fast, Karthik was running for the ball, everyone was clapping and shouting, Jagath gave me a dash hardly and my leg slipped, I fell and cried out in pain, Karthik came by running towards me fastly, picked

me up, and set me in the chair. Madhu sprays Move on the leg but, the pain does not reduced.

Jagat: Let's take her to the hospital.

Karthik: Everything is your fault Jagat, I keep saying her to run slow but, you provoked her to run fastly, look what happened now?

Jagat: Sorry! Anju.

Karthik kept shouting at Jagat, I was in pain for a while, Karthik's angry was not reduced, the match stopped and everyone went home with dull faces. Karthik took me home on his bike.

Aunt: Oh my God! What happened to Anju's leg?

Karthik: She fell while playing cricket.

Me: It's a small injury Aunt, nothing to worry.

Karthik: I observed how much pain you beared, now don't say it's small?

Aunt: Move has applied right, let's see until tomorrow, if not reduced, let's take her to the hospital.

Tablets were given by Karthik after dinner to me, Aunt put me to bed in the room, I could not sleep for a long time, I remembered one of the incidents as a child. I guess I was thirteen then! During the summer holidays, all the friends went to play together at school. I, Ramya, Kalyani, are playing a running race, Karthik is playing cricket with friends next door. While running I was hit by a stone and fell, a big blow to the leg, the blood kept coming non-stop.

IF SILENCE SPEAKS

Madhu screamed when she saw the blood and when heard it, Karthik ran up to me. I still can not forget how much fear and pain appeared on his face. He tried to get me up to take me to the hospital but could not navigate the pain, he started to run on his own by picking me up, the rest of them coming with us in confusion. Tears kept coming from Karthik's eyes. I rolled my eyes. He picked me up to the hospital without stopping, and when we reached to the hospital, there was no doctor, the compounder was alone and said the doctor will come in a while. The pain was so great, I couldn't stop crying. Seeing this, Karthik could not stay and shouted on the compounder to bring the doctor soon, but the compounder just sat there as if nothing had happened.

Hearing Karthik screams the doctor came softly from inside and bandaged my leg, gave me an injection and tablets. I didn't notice well but everyone's faces were fading. Karthik's face showed even more pain. I got a little energy and smiled, then he relaxed a bit. It's almost happened the same but, Jagat beared the angry of Karthik in the compounder place today.

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