

**CHAPTER – III**  
**TRANSLATION OF**  
**PRATIMA - IDOL**

## CHAPTER-III

### THE IDOL

Whole Ayodhya town was deep asleep. But Urmila was standing as if statue, in the balcony, like a small girl.

She glanced at the sky with gloomy eyes where stars were shining. She lost in her childhood memories. In those days she used to distribute starry sky with her sister saying- one is mine another is yours, third is mine, fourth is yours.

Then she remembered one more incident- it was a rainy day in Monsoon. Sky was full of dark clouds. The dark clouds were roaring like a lion converting the sky into the jungle.

Terrified with the thundering and clattering of lightning, we used to hold each other in deep embrace. Fearfully, she asked Seeta, "Sister, Is the sky going to fall now? Are we going to get smashed under it?" Seeta had smiled and replied, "Uma, don't worry. You are so innocent. It will not fall down and if it does so, our mother earth will take us in her womb and we will hide ourselves before we get crushed,

Urmila's throat choked with emotions, she wiped tears in her eyes...and thought- Where is my sister today, who used to give me fortitude, built my morale.

She might be somewhere under this unbounded sky. Will she be?

Who knows the truth? My sister was sure that the sky never falls, but whatever happened with her was really like falling the sky upon her head. Although she was better half of Lord Ramchandra, she was banished from Ayodhya city due to doubt about her character by a trivial citizen in the

Has she committed Suicide in the river Ganga? ... Or has she fall prey to wild animals of jungle?

When we married in the same family, we had seen lots of dreams, together for our children. They will play together, grow up together, fight together against enemies, etc.

But ...

Urmila glanced at the sleeping town again, she thought that everyone in the city might be dreaming about 'Ashwamedha Yagya'... But I am standing here in the balcony at midnight with tearful eyes!

The horse of Ashwamedh will soon go to conquer the neighbouring regions, states, etc. It symbolize everybody's acceptance to Lord ramchandra's supremacy as a king- his greatness as a ruler.

On this occasion my sister Seeta had to be performing all rituals with her husband, with her husband.

But ---

Her husband will be accompanied by her idol!

Urmila heard a soft voice and turned back.

The maid looked at her and said "It is almost midnight, how much time you are going to wait for my lord. He has gone to meet his elder brother- his highness. He may not....."

Urmila smiled despondently and said, "Earlier I waited for him for fourteen years. I cannot be restless if he is late for some hours I am habituated to it."

The maid wanted to ask her whether she should bring some milk for her. But Urmila turned her back and again started gazing at the starry sky.

In the evening she had gone to see the gold idol of Seeta, only because of Laxman's persual.

She returned from the picture hall, with sweet memories of Seeta -- "we four sisters got married to four brothers in a family at the same time and became sisters- in- law.

While giving blessings to four couples, Sage Vishwamitra had said, "It is very rare to origin and confluence four rivers at the same place. But you did it."

Princess of Mithila became the daughters-in-law of Ayodhya. How happy we were at that time. Seeta had said, "Now, we will live together all the time, like twin buds on the creeper. Only death could separate us."

Terrified with the thought of death I stopped her, and she had just smiled. Her smile -----

How skillful the sculptor is! He could bring her smile in the gold idol. He sculpted her smile as it was. He made the gold idol just by visualizing her from a wall painting of coronation ceremony. He could bring the same liveliness of Seeta's smile on the face of gold statue.

But now after the cruelty of the destiny can we find the same smile on her face?

Urmila sighed deep and gazed at the sky. With the thought of loneliness in the vast world she trembled for a moment. She thought, "I have everything - husband, son, wealth, but still in this large universe, I am all alone. My husband is busy in the preparation for Aswamedha Yagya and Chandraketu - her son has gone for hunting.

When Chandraketu was born, I thought, I was not alone, now I can spend my time easily. As if he had brought eternal joy, happiness for me. But destiny can make eternal joy momentary. Mother's blind love for the child could not imagine it then, but today Chandraketu is going away from me. He is getting busy with his friends, and education. He is taking lessons of armoury. He is lost in his own world. Finally-finally- I remain alone-in my world."

She could not see the shining treasure in the sky. She closed her eyes. And lost herself in the darkness of her mind.

She could not guess, how much time she was standing there, but she opened her eyes, hearing the words full of happiness - "Mother, Mother"

Chandraketu had arrived from hunting. He took her blessing by touching her feet.

She blessed him and smiling a little said, "You are getting taller and taller every day.

Mother, not just tall but I am going to be brave like uncle and father. If you come to know about my performance in hunting -----

Interrupting him, Urmila said, "Some poor deers may have got final beatitude by you. The lad shook his head in negation and said.. "no.no."

"Then ?"

"Then what? I have killed a terrible man eater tiger. It was frightening nearby villages. So, I decided to kill it. I was seeking it. And suddenly it confronted me. Quickly holding my bow ,I targeted his neck. If I had missed it...

She trembled with the thought of mishap and uttered slowly , "Didn't you remember me while in dangering yourself ?"

Chandraketu laughed and replied, "No, I did not remember anyone. There was not a single thought in my mind. I forgot everything. Even I forgot myself. I could see only the goal. The wild beast, precisely speaking his neck.

I killed him with a single arrow. I wish to be like my uncle- Lord Ramchandra who is renowned for his expertise in archery, who could target his aim with a single arrow.

Trembling with fear Urmila, stared at his eyes, and muttered, "But don't you think it is risky?"

"Mother, courage is a manly quality." Chandraketu replied.

Urmila thought, the courage in man's eye is the priceless ornament for him. But what about woman- she has got tears only.

Looking at her who had lost in her thoughts , the boy said, 'Mother, do you know before going for the hunting uncle Ram honoured me by shouldering a responsibility. He called me and said, " I would like to send you

to protect the horse of Ashwamedha. Won't you go?" Without hesitation, I said, "yes."

"Now, I will be away from Ayodhya for one year..."

"Are you going for one year?"

The boy laughed mischievously and asked, "Hadn't Father gone away for fourteen years with uncle to dwell in the wood? Don't worry, I'm going for only one year, I will defeat all enemies who will try oppose our supremacy by stopping the horse and I will come back, victoriously and then you ...".

Urmila was looking at her son, proudly. She found a flame in his eyes instead of bunch of colourful flowers that she used to see in his childhood.

Stroking boy's back by way of endearment she said, "Go, have dinner and sleep. You might be exhausted due to the four days travel for hunt."

Urmila kept on thinking are all men hard hearted? My husband did not look back even for a moment, while going to dwell in jungle, for fourteen years, Lord Ram renounced my sister without thinking for a moment. And now my boy also...

Urmila was lost in her memories she was looking at Ayodhya absent mindedly. She was brought back to consciousness by a maiden, "My lady lord Laxman has arrived". Urmila turned back quickly and said, "But, I did not hear chariot's sound."

"He came on feet, My Lady". Answered the maiden.

Urmila quickly went into the inner apartment. Laxman was sitting on swing. It was moving to and fro. Like the oscillating movements of swing his mind might be swinging with thoughts. His face was reflecting those oscillations. Urmila asked, "If the brother-in-law said yes?" Laxman shook his head in negation. Gloomily, looking at her he said, "I thought, I could convince him, but..."

The right to decide, whether sister-in-law's idol is as accurate and beautiful as the real one belongs to only two persons- you and elder brother."

Urmila, while holding the silky rope of the swing, smiled and said,

“Yes, it’s true.”

“You lived with sister Seeta and Lord Ramchandra for fourteen years in jungle. But you couldn’t recognize her armlets. I know only anklets, you had said, don’t you remember?”

She paused for a moment and said, “The people in Raghukul are really unique. Once they decide to do something, no one can deviate them, even a little bit.

You can’t be exception to the rule, how can your elder brother be ?

Listening that memory Laxman smiled a little. Urmila became happy to see him smiling. She thought, it seems like the cloudy sky has become clear and fresh sunlight has spread everywhere. She said, the artist is really skillful. Make an idol from gold is more difficult than making the statue of stone.

“I was also telling the same t\*\*. He agreed with it. He even knows that the artist should be admired. I thought he will say, yes, now or then. I implored for his approval for long time. I hoped that his loving, gentle mind will conquer his vowed, hard mind, but...

Urmila murmured, that hard, vowed mind made him denounce my sister. only because some slanderous, false remarks about her character made by someone as she lived at foreign land for some days. He didn’t have to take such rumours seriously. Social mind can not be always pure like river Ganga. It turns turbid in flood. I don’t think he doesn’t know it but...

But- his vowed, hard mind...

Laxman smiled gloomily and said, Only men can understand the sorrows of men, not women. Duty is very much important, sometimes. And, Duty makes him harder than anything. He has to give up all the gentle emotions, like friendship, pity, happiness. It is very difficult to read supreme mind of Supreme Being like my brother...”

Smiling sadly Urmila said, “ I agree women do not understand sorrows of men, but do you think only men understand the sorrows of women?”

The son had gone for venery only for four days. But I was restless How did I do that only God knows. I could endure your separation for 14 years. But now, I don't have those patience. Tomorrow, Chandraketu will go with the horse of Ashwamedha. I know he will come back as conqueror. But till that moment being mother, my mind.... ..let it be.

At least if men should understand that wife's mind is also as tender as mother's...

Now, have some fruits and take rest for sometime. If the artist is not destined to fulfill his desire then..."

While Laxman was rising, suddenly a maid rushed in.

"The chief guard of The picture house has arrived. He wants to talk to you right now."

Laxman got surprised. He thought, I protected the gold idol of sister-in-law with care and strenuous effort. And today at this last moment, Has something wrong happened? A little while ago whatever Urmila was talking about society it is not false. Has an irascible man ....

He realized that the maid was waiting for reply. He ordered her to escort the guard up.

Hearing whatever the guard narrated, Urmila and Laxman looked surprisingly at each other.

He said, "It is your order not to allow anyone to enter in the art gallery. But Lord Ramchandra himself arrived there\_ his face seemed darkened and eyes senseless.

There was no one with him, even an attendant. Without saying a word he went quickly into the art gallery. He closed its doors so hardly that...

Urmila and Laxman were looking at each other. They knew that he very rarely gets angry. At first he opposed the idea of Ashwamedha Yagya. But accepted it, only to follow the order of sage Vasishtha. But- what happened today? Which storm disturbed ocean?



Laxman was puzzled. Did he get angry due to my insistence to see the idol for the satisfaction of the artist?

Or did he not like the idea of keeping the idol in tomorrow's ceremony in place of his betterhalf.

But it was not the time, only to think. He called Urmila, "Uma, come with me."

Standing in front of the door of the art gallery, Laxman called his brother- "brother, brother." But there was no reply. Looking at husband anxiously, Urmila also called her brother-in-law. But there was no reply.

There was no movement.

Laxman opened the door a little bit and peeped inside. As soon as he saw the unconscious body of brother lying in front of idol, he opened the door with a crash.

With palpitating heart he came forward. Urmila's mind was shivering with fear. Somehow she managed to enter/collected the courage to enter inside.

While touching brother's head lovingly, Laxman shouted " Brother has become unconscious ,ask the guard to fetch the water."

Urmila and Laxman kept on calling him till the guard arrived with water . But Ramchandra did not hear those afflicted and intense call . Finally, Guards brought water. Laxman sprinkled it on Ramachandra's face His eyelids moved and lips opened a bit-

"Brother, have you recognized me?" Laxman asked with choked voice.

Brother in law-I am Uma"Urmila said.

But unconscious Ramchandra could not hear a single word . Laxman told the servent, to run fast and bring the royal doctor. Urmila again sprinkled water on Rachandra's face. His shaking lips were muttering something . Both of them leaned to listen those words-

"Seeta -----Janaki --- -Vaidehi ---- forgive me – forgive -me..."