

Fyatarus in Spring Festival

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Miss Piu, Miss Jhinuk and...

Though readers know it from the very initial stage, still it is repeated here that our favorite writer Nabani Dhar and his ex-model wife Meghamala Dhar lives on the 9th floor of the Himgiri Apartments in South Kolkata. Who hasn't read Nabani's books "The Impotent", "Shadow in Petticoat", "Senility of the Saint"? Oh who hasn't?

However, the fact was that on the day before the color festival, a short, fat, black man with a dirty tery-lined shirt and similar pants, holding a discolored, disfigured briefcase between his legs, was discovered at the Muchipara Bus Stop. He was having a go, one by one at the groundnuts from the shabby two-pice-worth packet. To take an auto or a minibus or a taxi, Miss Piu and Miss Jhinuk appeared there. They had cell phones and they wore jeans and fashionable tees. Amused by the appearance of the short dork, they started giggling while sending messages on their phones. The man farted and they giggled even more.

Finishing his nuts the short one turned to the missies. In his gruff voice-

- How many?

They were nonplussed. What does 'how many' mean? Again, with more gruffness

- How many?

Miss Piu at last said limply

-What?

The man removed the briefcase and holding it high with his right hand started drumming it with his left and sang in a horrific voice

- How many nights do I have to sleep alone?

Not waiting for another moment Miss Piu and Miss Jhinuk started walking.

DS had sung that line only once and he had not noticed the arrival of Madan and Purandar Bhat. Madan bellowed

- No, I have told you repeatedly that you can no more remain a Fyataru. You never paid heed before. You will be cut out today itself. I am not ready to hear any argument. What say, Purandar?
- I have been in revolutionary politics, have seen more people being expelled from the party than those joined.

- His name is DS

A bottle of liquor

He was murdered

For being a frivoler.

DS started whimpering and blowing his nose. Madan started, a bit tenderly this time,

- You had elbowed that Anglo woman near Metro cinema. I did not say anything. Your wife would deliver. You stared at the young nurses. How far can you be excused?

Suddenly DS shocked both of them and started howling. People stared at a fat grown man's howls.

- Will you stop? Why have you started mourning!

Purandar said

- Mess! Pure mess it is.

DS came back to the whimpers from the howls. And started

- I never did anything. I was watching the road and munching the nuts while those two bitches
- Shame on you DS, they are celebrities, both come on the TV.. Madan is furious.
- Don't tell me about the cheap shows they do. Celebrity my foot. The red light areas demand more respect.

DS stopped whimpering and said

- They were laughing at me. I farted and they giggled even more. When I could not control I asked their rates twice and that song of Kumar Shanu¹...

Purandar said-

- Madan da, had I been at DS's place I would have done the same thing. He sang, I would have pelted poems...

DS became more composed

- What poems?

- Looking at the poet

You laugh and nod

Soon shall I

Perch you on my rod.

- That's cool. But boss, the meaning of rod here...
- Leave it. You don't need to know the meaning of rod. So Purandar, DS got released this time.
- Seems so

- Now minus those tramps. Now then, Nabanida's prestige is at stake. Yesterday he cried over the booze. He said repeatedly- 'even with you three as brothers I have to bow to this insult, I would rather take some Folidol and die.'
- What happened? Meghu eloped?
- No, it's not her. What happened is the fuckers who stay at the Himgiri Apartments – tomorrow evening they will celebrate the festival of colours in the compound. It is called the spring festival, Do you know what it is, DS?
- Spring bring pox, and goddess of pox will be worshipped.
- No. No one has seen so little knowledge in such a big head. The spring festival is celebrated on the day of Holi- the girls tie flowers and sing catlike, and some alpha males throw colours from the backside. Pure whoring.
- So what the fuck is it for Nabani da? If they want to act like whores, let them.
- No. In that flat live 120 filthy rich families. But only one popular person- writer Nabani Dhar and they never called him. They did not even put his name in the card. Instead they have called some whooping procurator as chief guest. Five hundred forty three best sellers and he was struck out.
- So, let us fly and charge bombs from the terrace. Let's screw the celebration.
- Not that I have not thought of that. First thing is that they have covered the top. Number two; Nabanida lives on the 9th floor. If something drops from above they will take it as Nabanida's doing. Once a plate and a bottle slipped from his hands. Thank God there was no one around or he would have been framed for murder.
- Purandar was quiet for some time now. Finally he said,
- But why did they leave out Nabanida? Nabanida is expected in all the functions.
- You too are becoming a dickhead just like DS. Nabani da is writing his autobiography "Open Names"

- So what?
- The root cause is that. All his own scandals and that too of other people have been made public. They have filed cases against him. They have also threatened him. All at Himgiri have decided in a meeting that there will be no entry for Nabanida.
- So what will we do?
- Not clear. Let's shove down some tea and biscuits at the tea-stall. The brain will start working.

And with that Madan took out his dentures from the side pocket of his kurta and wore them straight away.

Madan's brain is charged...

They lit a *Charminar* after the tea and biscuits. A woman was standing by the roadside awaiting her kid's school bus. DS and Purandar were throwing glances so they did not realize that Madan was not smoking. Eyes closed, he was swaying. They got startled as suddenly he laughed out loud.

- This is what Madan is. No rumpus with me.
- What happened?
- What? Solid, liquid, smoke, all three went in and I got the plan.
- What? Of fucking up the function?
- Fuck's father. But in a new style. Oh! What a brain I have here, all will happen and I will not even move my fingers. With legs dangling from the terrace we'll watch the show.
- Okay, tell me the plan.
- Not the whole plan. The Telipara slum is just outside the Himgiri Apartment. Yes or no?
- Right

- Good
- There is a country liquor shanty inside the slum.
- Yes
- There live the thugs, old and young
- Though you won't get those who are at the jail
- Okay, the rest will do. Tomorrow we brothers shall go to the shanty around 3 pm. We shall share one bottle. Both of you will appear depressed. On my signal DS will cry out loud, I'll take care of the rest

At the liquor shanty at Telipara

Fellows smeared with tar, colors from the press, silver and brown are boozing. Singing. They are throwing colors in between stray slangs and moves. Suddenly DS cried out loud. Madan rose.

- We are poor. Hungry. The old are having fun with the ripe whores at the hotels. None to hear our cries.

Crowd gathered. DS went on. Madan said

- Will they allow us if you cry? They are rich people. They will listen to songs, will kick our asses if we want the same.

Some cried out amidst the crowd

- Who will kick the ass of the poor? Who is it?

Madan wore his dentures

- There is Hingiri apartment. There is a big show. We too went but they drove us away.
- Yes, they have been testing mics since morning.

DS wailed

Madan's voice rose.

- He is our younger brother. He said Kumar Shanu will come; Abhijit² will come; so I shall go. We thought, a festive day it is and transport isn't great; we shall accompany him, but they did not allow us.

Kumar Shanu. Abhijit. The news spread like wildfire.

Get them. Get them.

A big crowd consisting of boozed up people, women and children went towards Himgiri. The chief guest famous procurator Gojendranath Porel had just arrived. The mike testing was on the bang. With the influence of one promoter resident Miss Piu and Miss Jhinuk had arrived with their boyfriends. The evening was waning. Girls with flower bands, boys in designer kurtas, colors and food and hidden business of booze were ready. A sudden noise came from outside.

The doormen had closed the doors from fear. People came crashing on the gate. Amid this chaos people failed to notice the three of them taking flight and landing softly on the terrace of Himgiri. They sat there with their legs dangling.

The clamour turned into howls. Stones came pelting by, along with bottles and containers. Instead of talking full form the celebration trembled at the car park--who knew what was happening, roars came from outside

Beat them up, beat them.

On everyone's request the secretary had attempted to reach the gate but that very moment, a mini bomb banged at the gate. Crashing sounds. The secretary called the police,

- I am calling from the Himgiri Apartments. Please send force immediately.

- What do you mean? Force on the day of festivity? Are you crazy?
- We are being attacked.
- What did you say?
- Attack
- Brawls happen on such days. Manage it.
- Manage, how? There are the thugs of the Telipara slum attacking.

- Okay. Hang up. Bloody problem, hey, who is on duty now?

Another socket bomb banged. The police arrived. The election was on the cards. Even the police did not want to bother the parties; so a meeting was conducted. It was a meeting for peace. It took time. It's a difficult task to make the boozers see reason. The spring festival was upset but the sense of fear still lingered. With their food packets in hand, Mr Porel, Miss Piu and Miss Jhinuk went home with police protection.

Further into the night...

Three of them dived to Nabani Dhar's flat. Nabani was wearing a pair of half pants, with Sai Baba's³ lockets and beads on his bare chest.

- Oh my brothers, come to my arms. Black Dog. Ice Cubes. Soda, Nabani called out
- Meghu, Meghu... just come and see who are here.

Meghamala Dhar, came out wearing a house coat over her transparent nightdress. She was holding a tray of fish fries.

- It's okay, no need to call out. I know that my brothers have come

Nabani said

Spring festival has flopped.

DS said

-Meghu boudi⁴

-Yes dear

-I'll take home eight fries. Today is a festive day. I have a wife and a son. They have never tasted this kind of stuff.

-----**Translated by Debadrita Bose**

Glossary:

¹ Kumar Shanu is a Bollywood singer whose songs were particularly popular in the 1990s

² Abhijit was another popular Bollywood singer during the 90s.

³ Sai Baba (1835-1918) was an Indian spiritual master.

⁴ It's the common Bangla term referring to a friend's or a brother's wife