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Submitted to:

Dr. Fakrul Alam

Head of the Department

Department of English

East-West University.

Submitted by:

Mahatabur Rahman

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Department of English

East-West University.

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I am really very grateful to my teachers, friends and family members who have always supported and helped me in my every steps of life. I specially thank Dr. Fakrul Alam, his true inspiration and guide tremendously influenced me to successfully comprehend and complete such difficult work of Rabindranath Tagore.

Introduction:

Born in 1861, Rabindranath was one of the key figures of the Bengal Renaissance. He started writing at an early age, and by the turn of the century had become a household name in Bengal as a poet, a songwriter, a playwright, an essayist, a short story writer and a novelist. In 1913 he was awarded the Nobel prize. He founded visva Bharati; a university located in Shantiniketan. He was called he “Great Sentinel” of modern India by Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore steered clear of active politics, but is famous for returning the knighthood conferred on him as a gesture of protest against the Tallianawala Bagh massaere in 1919.

Tagore was a pioneering literary figure, renowned for his ceaseless innovations in poetry, prose, drama, music and painting which he took up late in life. His work include some sixty collections of verse, novels like “Gora, Chokher Bali” and “The Home and the World”, plays like “Red Oleanders” and “The Post Office”. Over a hundred short stories, essays on religion, social and literary topics and over 2000 songs, including the national anthems of India and Bangladesh, are attribute him.

Rabindranath Tagore died in 1941. His eminence is India’s greatest modern poet remains unchallenged to this day.

The Post Office originally written in Bangla, is one of the masterpieces of the great poet Rabindranath Tagore. It blends symbolism and allegory to tell the story of a naive boy with a inquisitive mind. He is simple, but thoughtful, having a passion for exploring the unexplored world. Amal,

the boy, through his every utterance in the play, in fact, symbolizes human being's eternal liking for freedom, for attaining what is challenging, though intellectually satisfactory. Other characters of the play contribute to the growth of the character, "Amal". Their interaction with him not only reveals the inner feelings of the protagonist but also amuses the reader and audience to a great extent.

I have chosen "The Post Office", not only because of its simple and natural use of language but also the characters and their experience really inspired me to take it as a challenge and do the translation which was a very hard and laborious task. I especially liked the character of Amal, the small loving boy who has a deep eagerness to know the world and explore the unseen and unknown adventures of life. His courage and simplicity is really impressive and inspired me to translate his world.

The English translation published and translated by Rupa, India, appears to me a bit poetic in terms of language and use of words. Sometimes the dialogues are less informal unlike is the original. Since this is a play and can be staged for the audience, the translator need to translate the dialogue as they are spoken by the characters in real life situations. To me the English translation by Rupa somehow lacks quality, though it uses English in an eventful way. Also, in some places it lacks the original flavor, for example while Tagore uses the phrase blue hills, in the conversation between Amal & grandfather (28 in Bangla), the Rupa translator converts it into green hills (P. 39-40 in English). Tagore rightly put them as blue hills realizing that the hills by look bluish from the

faraway. So the translator, here, could have been nearer to the original meaning.

Translating a play from source language to a target language is very difficult.

According to Edward Sapir, in "Translation Studies", written by Susan Bassnet-McGuire, language is a guide that associates social reality and human beings in society through language.

So, sometimes it becomes difficult to maintain exact equivalence in translation because translation is always concerned with the value of culture, context and situation.

Eugene Nida in his essay, "Principles of Correspondence", mentions that sometimes it becomes difficult to have equal words to convey the same meaning.

In the essay, "The Politics of Translation" Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak" states that a translator should have close connection with both source and target language and strives for cultural equivalence so that one can do exact translation.

Finally, we come to George Steiner, and in his essay, "The Hermereutic Motion", he states that from one language into another a translator creates something new, and it becomes transcreation.

The Post Office

Madhovdatta: I am really in trouble. When he was not here I had nothing to be worried about. He has come, God knows, from where-but now if he leaves me my home will be empty.

Doctor, do you think he-

Doctor: If he lives, he will live long, but as the medical scriptures say, I am afraid of that-

Madhovdatta: If what?

Doctor: The scriptures say, poittikan sonnipatjan, kafbat samud- bhaban-

Modhovdatta: Enough, don't throw you scripture at me- it makes me anxious, just tell me what I should do now.

Doctor: (taking snuff), keep the patient under very careful observation.

Modhovdatta: All right, but tell me how. I should do that

Doctor: As I told you before, you cannot let him go outside for a while.

Madhovdatta: He is a child, and it is very difficult to confine him to the house.

Doctor : Then what else would you like to do? Both the autumn sun and the damp will be very harmful for the little child- as the scriptures say-

Madhovdatta: Please forget scripture. Then as you say, he has to be confined to the home- is there no way out?

Doctor: No, no way out. As the scriptures say-

Madhovdatta: O doctor, If don't refer to your scriptures, rather tell me what will happen to him and what I have to do. But your prescriptions are very hard to follow. The poor little child bears the pain of disease so quietly, but when he takes your medicine, it pains my heart to see his suffering.

Doctor: Listen- the more he suffers, the more chance he has for recovering. That is why the Sage chayabana said, "In medicine as in good advice, the least palatable is the most trusted. I am better of now.

Grandfather enters:

Madhovdatta: O, God, grandfather has come.

Grandfather: Why do you want to get rid of me?

Madhovdatta: You are a devil to send children of.

Grandfather: So what? You are not a child. Nor have you your own children- then why do you worry?

Madhovdatta: I have brought a child to my home.

Grandfather: How is that!

Madhovdatta: My wife was dying to adopt a child.

Grandfather: Yes- that I know. But you did not want to do so.

Madhovdatta: You know grandpa, how I have had to earn money- by dint of hard toil- So I never thought that somebody else's child would come in and waste all my hard earned money so easily- but, now you see this boy clings to my heart in such a strange way.

Grandfather: So the more you spend on him, the more you think glorifies your money?

Madhovdatta: Formerly, earning money was a need for me; I simply couldn't stop making money. But now making money as I know it is all for this dear boy.

Grandfather: Well, that is good, but tell me from where did you pick him up?

Madhovdatta: He is the relative of my wife. The boy lost his mother in his early life and recently he lost his father too.

Grandfather: Poor little fellow! Then he really needs me.

Madhovdatta: The doctor says all the organs of this little boy are fighting each other; and there is a very little hope for his life. There is only one way to save him and that is to keep him out of this autumn wind and sun any way possible. You like to keep children out of doors, and this is your passion at this old age- so fear you.

Grandfather: You are right- I am already as bad as the autumn wind and sun. But, brother, I know some tricks to keep them indoors. Now I am going to finish my work, then I will come back and become friends with the child.

Enters Amal Gupta:

Amal: Uncle!

Madhovdatta: Hello, Amal.

Amal: Couldn't I go out of this courtyard?

Madhovdatta: No, dear you can't.

Amal: Look, where Aunt grinds lentils in the quern, where the squirrel is sitting with his tail up and picking up the broken grains of lentils and crunching them, can't I go over there even?

Madhovdatta: No, My dear, no.

Amal: If I were a squirrel- it would be lovely, Uncle, why won't you let me go out?

Madhovdatta: The doctor says, going outside would be bad for your health.

Amal: How does he know that?

Madhovdatta: Doesn't, the doctor knows every thing. Does not he read a lot of books.

Amal: How can one know every thing only by reading?

Madhovdatta: But, why not?

Amal: (with a sigh), Ah, I haven't read any books and so I know nothing!

Madhovdatta: Look, learned people are all like you, they don't go out of doors.

Madhovdatta: But, how can they? They only read books, and they don't bother about anything else.

Amal babu, You will be a learned man when you grow up, and then you will stay home and read a lot of big books, and every one will admire you.

Amal: No, no uncle, I certainly don't want to be a learned man.

Madhovdatta: What did you say Amal?

It would have been a great thing of my life if I were a learned person.

Amal: I would rather go out and see everything that there is.

Madhovdatta: Listen Amal! What would you see? What is there to see?

Amal: I can see that far-away hill from our window- and I often desire to go beyond those hills.

Madhovdatta: Oh, you are silly! As if there is nothing more to be done but just riding on the top of that hill and away. You talk nonsense. Since that hill stands there upright as a barrier, it means you can't go beyond it- and, so the hill is there.

Amal: Uncle, do you think it is preventing us from crossing over? No, as the earth can't speak, it raises its hands to the sky and beckons towards it. Those who live far off and sit alone by their windows in the middle of the day can hear it, and so why can't learned people hear the sound?

Madhovdatta: They don't have time for that sort of nonsense- they aren't crazy like you are.

Amal: Yesterday I met someone crazy like me.

Madhovdatta: Is that true? How is that possible?

Amal: He had a bamboo stick on his shoulder. There was a small bundle tied to the top of the stick. He had a brass pot in his left hand and was wearing an old pair of shoes. He was going to that hill. I called him and asked. "Where are you going?" He replied, "I don't know, I asked again, "why are you going?" He said "To find work- Uncle, do you think, we have to look for work?"

Madhovdatta: Of course, so many people look for it.

Amal: Oh lovely; I will also be looking for work, just like them.

Madhovdatta: If you don't find it then I myself will try again. I watched that man from the door walking slowly with his worn- out shoes. He stopped by the stream under the fig tree, and washed his feet in it. Then he took out some gramflour, from his bundle, moistened it with water and began eating it. After world, he tied up his bundle and shouldered it again- tucked up his cloth above his knees and crossed the stream. I told Aunt as I went-up the stream, I will eat gram flour just like him.

Madhovdatta: What did your Aunt say?

Amal: She said, "Get well and then I will take you across the stream and have some gram flour- When will I get well?"

Madhovdatta: Soon, dear.

Amal: Really? then I will go there right at the moment I recover.

Madhovdatta: Where will you go then?

Amal: I will keep walking and walking, crossing innumerable streams, wading through water and when people will be asleep, I will shut the doors in the heat of the day and I will tramp on and seek work to far away land.

Madhovdatta: Very good, my dear, but you had better get well first.

Amal: Uncle, never tell me to become a bookish learned man.

Madhovdatta: What would you be then?

Amal: I can't think of any thing more- I will let you know later on though!

Madhovdatta: But mind you, don't call out and talk to strangers.

Amal: But I really like to talk to them.

Madhovdatta: What? If they kidnap you!

Amal: That would be great. But nobody wants to take me away- everyone tells me stay here.

Madhovdatta: I have a lot of work to do and so I will leave but, remember my child, do not go out side.

Amal: All right, I won't. But, uncle, please let me sit in this room by the roadside.

(2)

Dairyman: Curds- Curds- Good, delicious curds.

Amal: Curd seller, Curd seller, o-curd seller.

Dairyman: Why are you calling me? Will you buy some curds?

Amal: How can I? I have no money.

Dairyman: Then why you holding me up?

Amal: I would go with you if I could.

Dairyman: With me!

Amal: Yes, I feel drawn to you when I hear you calling far- down from the road.

Dairyman: My child, what are you doing here?

Amal: The doctor has forbidden me to go outside, and so I sit here all day long.

Dairyman: O, dear, what has happened to you?

Amal: I don't know. As I didn't learn anything, I don't know what the matter is with me- Dairyman, where are you from?

Dairyman: From a village

Amal: Is it very far?

Dairyman: Our village lies on the river Shamli at the foot of the Panch-mura hills.

Amal: Punch-mura hill-Shamli river- Hmmm, perhaps I have seen your village, but I can't remember for sure one.

Dairyman: Have you seen it? Have you ever been to Pahartoli?

Amal: No, I haven't. But, it seems, I have been. Your village, under some very old big trees, just by the side of the red road-isn't it so?

Dairyman: Yes, you are right, my child.

Amal: Cattle are grazing on the slope of the hill.

Dairyman: It is amazing! You are right. Cattles, our village, indeed there they are.

Amal: Women fill their pitchers with water from the river and carry them on their heads wearing red sarees.

Dairyman: Good! Very good! That's great.

Women from our village do come and draw water from the river. But they all don't wear red sarees; surely you must have been there for a walk someday.

Amal: I am telling the truth dairyman, I didn't go there at all. When the doctor will permit me to go out-side, will you take me to your village?

Dairyman: Of course my dear child, I must.

Amal: You will teach me how to sell curds. Like you I want to carry curds on my shoulder and walk along the long road.

Dairyman: Oh no! Why will you sell curds? By reading many books you will become a learned person.

Amal: No, no I will never be a learned person- I will be like you and take curds from the village by the red road near the old banyan tree, and I will be hawking it from village to village. How do you cry out, curds, curds, fine curds! Please teach me the way you say it.

Dairyman: O dear! It is not some thing for you to learn.

Amal: No, no I love to listen to that sound. I can't tell you how strange I feel when I hear your cry, so melodiously from the bend of that road peeping through the line of those trees! I hear the shrill cry of a lonely bird from almost the end of the sky.

Dairyman: Dear child, eat some curds.

Amal: But I have no money.

Dairyman: No, no, no, don't talk about money. If you take some curds from me, I will be very happy.

Amal: Are you getting late?

Dairyman: Not a bit, it is no more a loss to me, I learned it from you how to be happy selling curds. [Exit]

Amal: (intoning) curds, curds, fine curds! From the dairy village, down the Punch-mura hills by the Shamli river. Curds, good curds, in the early morning, the village women gather the cows under the trees and milk them, and in the evening they turn the milk into curds, curds-curds, curds, good curds. Here is the watchman strolling on the road.

Watchman, watchman, look here and please talk to me for a while.

Watchman: Why are you calling out like that?

Don't you fear me?

Amal? Why, why should I fear you?

Watchman: What if I catch you and take you away with me

Amal: Where will you take me to?

Is it very far? Right behind that hill?

Watchman: What if I march you straight to the king.

Amal: To the king? Take me then. But the doctor advised me not to go outside! No one can ever take me away-I have to sit here all day long.

Watchman: The Doctor won't let you go outside? I see your face looks pale and there are dark spots around your eyes. Your veins look out from your thin hands.

Amal: Won't you ring the bell watchman?

Watchman: The time hasn't come yet.

Amal: Some say the time has not come yet, and some say time has gone by. But when you strike the bell, the time will surely come.

Watchman: That is not possible. When the time will come, I will strike the bell.

Amal: I love to hear its sound. When it is mid-day and our meal is over, Uncle goes to work and Aunt falls asleep reading Ramayad, at the corner of the courtyard our doggie sleeps in the shadow with his nose in his curled up tail; then your bell strikes out, “ding, dong, ding, dong.”

Tell me why does your bell sound like that?

Watchman: My bell sounds to tell people, time waits for none; it goes on and on.

Amal: It goes on where? To which country?

Watchman: No body knows.

Amal: O’ no one reach that country? I desire so much to go away to that time- to that unknown country which is very faraway.

Watchman: Everyone has to go to that unknown place, my child.

Amal: Do have I to go there too?

Watchman: Of course.

Amal: But, the doctor has advised me not to go out.

Watchman: One day the doctor himself will take you there.

Amal: No, no, you don’t know him. He only tells me to stay inside.

Watchman: A greater doctor than him will come in and set us free.

Amal: When will that good doctor come? I don’t what to sit any more. I can’t bear sitting anymore like this.

Watchman: Don’t utter such words, my child?

Amal: You see- I am here where they have left me- I never moved a bit but, when your bell sounds like that ding, dong, ding, dong, my heart flies out, Watchman!

Watchman: Yes, my dear.

Amal: What is going on there in that big house on the other side of the road? Why is there a flag flying high and people coming in and out?

Watchman: O, it is a newly opened post office.

Amal: A Post office! Whose post office is this?

Watchman: My dear, whose post office would it be? The king's post office. This boy is very funny.

Amal: Do letters come from the king to his post office?

Watchman: Of course. One day you might receive a letter as well.

Amal: I receive a letter! But I am only a little boy.

Watchman: The king sends little notes to little boy.

Amal: That would be very nice. When will I have my letter? How do you know he will write to me?

Watchman: Otherwise why would he open a post office here right in front of your open window, with a golden flag flying on the top? This is a good little boy.

Amal: But who will fetch me my kings letter when it comes?

Watchman: The king has many postmen. Don't you see them walking around with round golden badges on their uniform?

Amal: Well, where do they go to?

Watchman: From door to door, through out the country- the boy's questions make me laugh.

Amal: Then I will be the king's postman when I grow up.

Watchman: Ha! Ha! Ha! Postman! That's good indeed! Rain or shine, rich or poor, from house to house delivering letters- that is great work! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Amal: Why are you laughing? That's what I would like to do best. Oh, your work is also very good- when silence prevails in a hot day, your bell sounds, ding dong, ding dong- and sometimes when I wake up at night

your bell strikes sadly ding dong, ding dong- through the darkness outside, and find the lamp blown out.

Watchman: The village headman is coming- I must go now. If he sees me chatting with you, he will surely cause trouble.

Amal: Where is the headman; where, where?

Watchman: Over there, see that huge palm leaf umbrella!

Amal: Has the king made him our head man?

Watchman: Oh, no! He himself has made the head man and who isn't afraid of him, he plays all his tricks with us and so every body is scared of him. It is his business to make enmity with all. I better go now today and do my job. I will come to you again tomorrow morning and tell you all the news of the town.

[exit]

Amal: It will be very nice to have a letter from the king everyday. I will read the letters by my window. Oh, but I can't read! Who will read them out to me?

Aunt reads her Ramyan. Can she read the king's writing? If no one can read that, then I will keep them and read them when I grow up. But what if the post man does not know me!

Headman, O Headman, can I talk to you for a while?

Headman enters:

Headman: Who the hell is that, calling me thus on the road? O' are you the wretched monkey?

Amal: You are the headman, everybody honours you.

Headman: (looking very pleased) yes, Oh, yes, they certainly do!

Amal: Does the king's postman listen to you?

Headman: Of course, will he be alive if he doesn't mind me?

Amal: Please tell the postman that my name is Amal, and I sit by the window here.

Headman: Why, why will I tell him that

Amal: It letters come for me-

Headman: Letters for you! Who will write a letter to you?

Amal: If the king writes-

Headman: Ha! Ha! Ha! What a little rogue you are. Ha! Ha! Ha! the king write a letter to you! Indeed! As if you are his most intimate friend! I have heard that the king is sick and hasn't been able to meet you for a longtime. So, it will not be too long and his letter may come for you today or tomorrow.

Amal: Mr. Headman! Are you angry with me!

Headman: Oh, no; how can be I angry with you?

Imagine! The king writing to him!

Modhovdatta has a devilish soul. He has made some quick money and so kings and his followers chat with him. Wait-I will teach him a good lesson. Oh, you-

little rogue, I will get the king's letter sent to your house very soon.

Amal: No, no, you don't need to do anything.

Headman: Why not? I will tell the king about you and he will not take much time- He will send out one of his footmen to get all the news about you!

No, Madhovdatta has gone too far- If the king hears of this, you will punished for you impudence.

[Exit]

Amal: Who are you walking thus and tinkling your anklets, please stop a while!

A Girl Enters:

Girl: How can I stop, it is already very late!

Amal: You don't want to stop, and don't like to sit here any more.

Girl: I don't know why you make me think of a morning star- what has happened to you?

Amal: I don't know really, the doctor won't let me out.

Girl: Ah, then don't go, you should listen to the doctor- otherwise, people will say that you are naughty. Thinking about going out side will make you restless; I had better close the window.

Amal: No, no don't do that- all other windows are shut and only this one is open for me. Will you tell me who you are surely- I don't know you!

Girl: I am Shudha. Perhaps I have not ever seen you.

Amal: Shudaha

Shudha: Don't you know? I am the daughter of the flower seller here!

Amal: What are you doing here?

Shudha: I gather flowers and string garlands. Now I am going to gather flowers.

Amal: Are you going to gather flowers? That is why your feet seem so glad and your jingle of anklets sound so soothing as you walk by. If I could be out too, then I would have picked some flowers for you.

Shudha: Would you really? Do you know about flowers as much as I do!

Amal: Yeas, I know a lot about them. I know the fairy tale about seven brothers and the one sister called Champa. It seems that, If every one sets

me free I would have gone right into the dense forest where nobody would find one's way out. And where the humming- bird rocks her on the end of the thinnest branch there I could have blossomed into a Champa, would you be my sister Parul than?

Shudha: O Dear! How can I be your sister Parul, I am Shudha, daughter of the flower seller, Shashi and I have to weave so many garlands everyday. But how nice it would be if I could sit here like you!

Amal: What would you have done then, all day long?

Shudha: I could have played with my doll Beni, the bride and Meni, the pussy cat, and- O' I should go now, I am late already, I wont find a single flower.

Amal: Please wait a bit, and talk with me, I really enjoy it?

Shudha: Well, don't be naughty, be good and stay here and I will talk with you again on my way back home.

Amal: And you will give me a flower?

Shudha: How can I give it free? It has to be paid for.

Amal: I will pay when I grow up. Then I will go out to look for a work on the otherside of the stream and then I will be able to pay.

Shudah: Very well, then

Amal: So you will be here when you have your flowers?

Shudha: I will

Amal: You will come really?

Shudha: Yes, I will.

Amal: Won't you forget me? My name is Amal, will you remember me?

Shudha: No, I won't forget you. I will surely remember you.

(Exit)

Some Boys Enter

Amal: Hi, where are you all going? stop here for a while.

Boys: We are going to play.

Amal: What will you play?

Boy's: We will play at being ploughmen.

Another boy: (Showing a stick). This is our plough share.

Second boy: We two will be a pair of oxen.

Amal: Will you play the whole day?

Boy's: Yes, all day long.

Amal: And you will come back to your home in the evening by the road along the river bank?

Boys: Yes, we will come back in the evening.

Amal: Then please pass by our house on your way back.

Boys: Why don't you come out and go play with us?

Amal: Doctor told me not to go out side.

Boys: Doctor! Do you hear what the doctor is saying? - Let's go, we are getting late.

Amal: Don't go. Play on the road near this window- I will love to watch you playing there.

Boys: What can we play there?

Amal: All my toys are lying here- take them. I can't play all by myself in my room, they are getting dirty and they are of no use to me.

Boys: Oh! These are wonderful toys! Look, here is a ship. There is old mother Jatai, Isn't that a handsome soldier!

Are you giving us all these toys?

Don't you really mind?

Amal: No I don't, please take them all.

Boys: We won't give them back.

Amal: No, I don't need them.

Boys: Won't you be scolded by any one for giving them to us?

Amal: No, nobody will tell me off. But please play with these toys in front of my door for a while every morning. I will give you new ones when these are old.

Boys: Ok, we will play here every morning. Friends put these soldiers into a line, we will play with them as if we are at war. Where can we get a gun? Oh, look, there is a big bit of reed. By breaking it let us make a gun. But brother, you are asleep already!

Amal: Yes, I am afraid I am feeling drowsy.

I don't know why I feel like that so often.

I have been sitting here for a long time, I can't sit anymore-my back aches.

Boys: It is just midday- why do you feel sleepy now? Listen, the bell strikes only the first hour of the midday watch.

Amal: Yes, the bell is going dong, dong, dong
It's calling me to sleep.

Boys: We'd better go now, see you tomorrow morning.

Amal: Can I ask you something before you go? You often go out- so, do you know the king's postman?

Boys: Yes, we know them quite well.

Amal: Who are they? Tell me their names.

A Boy: One is Badal, another a boy; one's name is Sarat and there are so many others.

Amal: Do you think they will find me if there is a letter for me?

Boys: Why not? If there is a letter for you, they will surely find you out.

Amal: When you will be here tomorrow morning? Will you bring any of them along so that he can know me?

Boys: Yes, we will.

(3) Amal in bed

Amal: Can't I even go near the window today, Uncle?

Has the doctor forbidden that?

Modhovdatta: Yes, dear, you see, you have been made yourself worse by sitting here day after day.

Amal: No uncle, no- I know nothing regarding my illness, but I feel very well whenever I am there.

Madhovdatta: By sitting there you have become friends with a lot of people of the town old and young as if it becomes a crowd place at my door.

Just see, today your face looks pale!

Amal: Uncle, I fear the beggar will go away as he will not see me by the window.

Madhovdatta: The beggar will go away as he will not see me by the window.

Madhovdatta: The beggar, who is that?

Amal: That man who comes and chats to me of different places and lands. I love to hear him.

Madhovdatta: In fact, I don't know any such man.

Amal: O' he might come anytime now. I beg of you uncle please tell him to sit in my room for a moment.

Grandfather enters in a beggar's guise

Amal: There you are, come here Mr. beggar, sit by my side.

Madhovdatta: Who's that? It's-

Grandfather (winking hard): I am the beggar.

Madhovdatta: Goad Grief!

Amal: Where have you been lately, dear Mr. Beggar.

Grandfather: I went to the Isle of Parrots.

I Have just come back from there.

Madhovdatta: The Parrot's Isle!

Grandfather: Why are you surprised?

I am not like you. I can go wherever I like.

Amal (clapping) Amassing! Keep your promise to take me with you as your follower when I recover from sickness.

Grandfather: Of course, I will keep my promise, and I will give you many tips of traveling, so nothing in sea or forest or mountain can prevent you from travelling.

Madhovdatta: What are you talking about, eh!

Grandfather: Amal, my dear, I am not afraid of seas or mountains, but if the doctor comes up with the uncle of yours, then all my magic and I must be beaten.

Amal: No, no Uncle, please don't say anything to the doctor. I will be lying here, doing nothing but, the day when I will be fine I will go to the beggar and nothing in sea, mountain and ocean will be able to stand in my way.

Madhovdatta: My dear child, don't keep on saying so- go and go- it makes me sad when you will talk like that.

Amal: Tell me Mr. Beggar, what does the parrot's Isle look like?

Grandfather: It is a wonderful land, a place of birds and no people anywhere. They sing and fly.

Amal: How splendid! Is it by the sea?

Grandfather: Of course!

Amal: And are the green hills there?

Grandfather: yes, they live in the green hills. At sunset there is a red glow on the hill side and all the birds with their green wings return to their nests- It's great to see.

Amal: Is there a waterfall in the hills?

Grandfather: Of course! Without waterfalls it seems nothing! It is as if-diamonds, fall had dance and make the pebbles jingle when the water fall into the sea. No doctor can stop them even for a moment. If the birds didn't bother me, I would have built a small cabin for myself beside their nests and spent the whole day counting sea-waves.

Amal: I wish I were a bird!

Grandfather: That would have been problematic. I hear you have told the dairyman that you want to become a hawker of curds when you grow up. I am afraid such a business will not flourish when you are among birds. You will lose a lot of money then.

Madhovdatta: This is really nonsense. You two will drive me crazy. I have to go.

Amal: Had the dairyman come, Uncle?

Madhovdatta: Of course! will he survive if wanders like me! He has left a Jar of curds for you saying that he is busy with his niece's wedding in the village, and has to rush off arranging a music land at Kamlipara.

Amal: But he promised to marry me to his little niece.

Grandfather: That's worrying!

Amal: He said she will be my beautiful little bride. She will have a pair of pearl-drops in her ears and will be clad in a nice red saree. In the morning she will milk her black cow and feed me warm foaming milk in a new earthen Jar, and in the evenings, she will carry the lamp a round the cow house, and then come and sit by me to tell me the story of Champa and his six brothers.

Grandfather: How charming your bride is! It would even tempt me though I am a beggar. But my child don't worry, let the wedding be fixed and tell you when you marry there will be many more nieces in his household.

Madhovdatta: Go away! Enough is enough.

Amal: My dear beggar, my uncle has gone away, Tell me has the king sent me a letter in the post office?

Grandfather: I have heard that his letter has already been posted. It is just on its way.

Amal: On the way? Which way? Is it on that road winding through the deep wood which you can follow when the sky is clear after the rains?

Grandfather: I see, you know all about it already- yes that's the way.

Amal: I know everything!

Grandfather: Yes it would seem so- but how?

Amal: I don't know that. It seems to me that I can see everything before me. I have seen them often. How long ago I can't tell. I can see it all, there, the king's postman has been often coming down the hillside alone, holding a lantern in his left hand and shouldering a bag of letters; has been coming down for a long time, for days and nights, and at the foot of the mountain where the waterfall flows, he comes through along the edge of the river. He walks through the narrow lane of rye fields- then comes along the sugarcane field and disappears into the tall stems sugarcanes; then he reaches the open meadow where the cricket chirps- there is no lady on the bank of river to be seen, only the snipes wagging their tails in the mud. Where he approaches me, my mind dances.

Grandfather: My eyes are not as young as yours, but I can see you through your eyes.

Amal: Mr. Beggar, do you know the king who owns this post office?

Grandfather: yes, Of course, everyday I go to him for alms.

Amal: Very well then. When I will be cured, I two will also go to him for my alms, right?

Grandfather: You don't need alms my dear, he will gladly give alms to you.

Amal: No, no. I will go to his royal gate and cry out "long live our king"! and will start dancing to the tabor's sound and ask for alms. Won't that be nice?

Grandfather: Very nice. If you go with me, I will get more alms. But what alms will you ask for?

Amal: I will tell him, "Make me your postman, and then I will hold a lantern in my hand and I will be delivering your letters door to door.

Do you know my beggar? Someone has told me, when I will recover from my illness, he will teach me how to beg and then- I will go with him and beg whenever I like.

Grandfather: What is his name?

Amal: Chidham

Grandfather: Which Chidham?

Amal: That blind, and lame man. He comes to my window everyday; a boy like me drives his cart. I told him that when I get well I will drive his cart.

Grandfather: That will really be very interesting.

Amal: He told me he would teach me how to beg and I requested my uncle to give him some alms; he said, he is a liar. All right, if he is a liar he certainly won't be able to see through his eyes- for sure.

Grandfather: You are right my dear child, it is true to say that he cannot see- whether you regard him a blind or not.

As he doesn't get alms, why does he come to you?

Amal: As he cannot see, I tell him many things about the world. What ever I tell you about different countries, he hears it from me. That day you told me about the country everything is weightless, and if you Jump a little one can easily cross the hills, so he was very happy to know about that country.

O beggar how can we get to that country?

Grandfather: There is an underground road, but it is quite difficult to find it out.

Amal: He is poor and blind and he can't see. He lives only by begging. He was very upset regarding this matter, I told him you are still able to go

to different places for begging, but every one won't get the opportunity to do so like you.

Grandfather: My dear child, if somebody has to stay in the house, should I not feel sorry for that?

Amal: No, no, I am not sad. At first when I was confined to the house it seemed to me that days were so long but since I saw the kings post office, I have been feeling well, it is a pleasure for me for staying in the house, I hope one day a letter will come for me, and when I think about this I am very happy and content to be in the house.

But I don't know what will the kings letter will say?

Grandfather: If does it the matter? Wouldn't it be enough if your name is just written on it?

Madhovdatta Enters

Madhovdatta: Do you know what trouble you two have made for me?

Grandfather: Why, what is the matter?

Madhovdatta: I hear that you are spreading rumors about how the king has pot the post office to write letters to you two.

Grandfather: Well, so what?

Madhovdatta: Our headman, Panchanan has written anonymous letters to the king about the matter.

Grandfather: Don't we know that the king knows everything?

Madhovdatta: Then shouldn't we be very careful? You will get me in trouble with him?

Amal: Mr. Beggar, will the king become angry?

Grandfather: What nonsense: Why will the king become angry? We will see about that. How can the king be angry with a child like you and a beggar like me.

Amal: Look Mr. beggar, I have been feeling a sort of darkness coming over my eyes since the morning; everything seems like a dream. I want to be very quiet. I don't even feel like talking. Will not the king's letter come? Say this room vanishes all of a sudden- if so.

Grandfather: (Fanning Amal), It will come, the letters will surely come today.

Doctor enters

Doctor: How do you feel today?

Amal: Doctor, I am feeling very well today, it seems that all my pain has gone away.

Doctor: (aside to Madhovdatta) Doesn't look so good. He feels well, that's very bad sign. Our Chakradatta has said-

Madhovdatta: For God's sake doctor, leave Chakradatta alone. Tell me, what is the matter.

Doctor: I fear, we can't hold him back any longer. I warned you before, but it looks like the boy is elated.

Madhovdatta: No doctor, I have taken the utmost care to, never let him out of doors; and the windows have been shut almost all the time.

Doctor: There is a strange wind about today. As I came in I found a strong wind blowing through the front door. That is very harmful. It is

better to lock the door. It would be better if your visitors stop coming here for two or three days. If someone comes unexpectedly, there is the back door. You had better shut his window as well, as it is letting in the sun's rays and keeping the patient awake.

Madhovdatta: Amal has shut his eyes, perhaps he is trying to sleep:

His face tells me-

Oh, doctor, I brought a child here whom I did not know before, but loved him as my own child, and now I suppose I am going to loose him.

Doctor: What? The headman coming towards your house! What a bother! I must leave now! You had better shut the door at once. I will send a new medicine when I go home. Try it on him- it may save him at last, if he can be saved any way.

The Headman enters

Headman: Hey, boy!

Grandfather: (Rising hastily), Be quiet!

Amal: No, Mr. beggar, you think I am sleeping but I am not.

I can hear everything. It seems to me that my mother, father are sitting besides me, and speaking to me.

Madhovdatta enters

Headman: O, there you are Madhov, I hear that now-a-days you are dillydallying with the rich!

Madhovdatta: What? Don't joke with me. We are ordinary people.

Headman: Hm-but I see your child is expecting a letter from the king!

Madhovdatta: He is only a small boy and foolish too! Don't take him seriously.

Meadman: No, no, it won't surprising at all!

It would be hard for the king to find a suitable family bond like you? Don't you see-the king has established his new post office right in front of your window?

Hey boy, here is the king's letter for you.

Amal: (starting up) Really!

Headman: If it is not real then what is it? You are the friend of the king eh! (showing a blank piece of paper), Ha, ha, ha, ha, here is your letter.

Amal: Please don't make a fool-of me

Mr. Beggar, please tell me- is it really the king's letter?

Grandfather: Yes, dear, it is his letter.

Amal: But, I don't see anything in it.

Headman, please tell me what the letter say.

Headman: The king writes, I am coming to your house shortly and you better prepare puffed rice for me-

I can't bear to stay in the place anymore. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Madhovdatta: (With folded arms) Headman I beseech you, don't make fun of him.

Grandfather: Fun! How dare he makes fun of him?

Madhovdatta: O, grandfather, are you too going crazy?

Grandfather: Yes, I am. That's why, today, I can see letters in the blank piece of paper. The king writes, he will come himself to see Amal, with the Royal doctor.

Amal: Beggar, O beggar, can't you hear his trumpet?

Headman: Ha, ha, ha! If he can't be crazy, he won't hear it.

Amal: Headman, I thought you were angry with me, and don't love me. I never could have believed you would fetch me the king's letter as really let me touch your feet.

Headman: This little child indeed has respect for his elders. He isn't smart, but has a good heart.

Amal: It seems that it is four in the watch, fourth watch, that's the sound striking ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong.

Is the evening star up, Mr. beggar? Why can't I see?

Grandfather: You can't because the windows are all shut. Wait let me open them.

Madhovdatta: What is that? who is it?- what a bother!

Voice from outside:

Open the door

Madhovdatta: Who are you?

From outside:

Open the door.

Madhovdatta: Headman, I hope that they are not robbers!

Headman: Who is there? I am the headman.

Aren't you afraid of me?

Look, the sound has stopped.

Panchanan doesn't care about anyone, even the biggest robber.

Madhovdatta: (Peering) they have broken the outer doors, and so there is no sound.

The king's herald enters

Herald: Our sovereign king will come to night.

Headman: O, my God!

Amal: At what hour of the night? At what hour?

Herald: On the second watch of the night.

Amal: When my friend, will the watchman strike his bell at the city gates, ding-dong, ding-dong- then?

Herald: Yes then, the king has sent his best Doctor to attend his little friend.

The Royal Doctor Enters

Royal Doctor: What's this? Why is everything around here close?

Open, open wide all doors and windows.

(Touching Amal's body) how do you feel, my child?

Amal: I feel very well, very well, doctor. I have no more Pain. Ah: you have opened all the windows and doors-

All I can see are the stars twinkling of the other side.

Doctor: Will you be able to leave your bed, and go with the king when he will be here in the middle of the night?

Amal: Yes, I will. It would be great if I can go outside. I will ask the king to find me the polar star. I must have seen that star often, but I don't know exactly which it is.

Doctor: He will tell you everything. (To Madhov), clean the room and Arrange flowers for the king's visit.

(Indicating the Headman) we should not let this person stay here.

Amal: No, no, Doctor, he is my friend. When you were not here, he brought me the king's letter.

Doctor: Very well, my child, he will be allowed to stay here if he is a friend of yours.

Madhovdatta: (Whispering in to Amal's ear) Dear child, the king loves you, he himself is coming- beg some gift from him. You know we are not rich, don't you?

Amal: Don't worry, uncle, I have made up my mind.

Madhovdatta: What have you made up your mind about my child?

Amal: I will ask him to appoint me as one of his postmen, so that I can wander from one country to another, delivering his message from door to door.

Madhovdatta: (Slapping his forehead) Alas, is that all you will want?

Amol: Uncle, the king will come, what offerings are you going to make to him?

Herald: He has commanded puffed rice.

Amal: Puffed rice? Headman you are right! You know all about the king which we didn't.

Headman: If you send a person to my house, then I can manage some good things.

Doctor: No need for that. Now please be quiet everybody. Sleep is coming over him. I will sit by his head-he is dropping into sleep. Put off the light. Let the star-light come in, he is falling asleep.

Madhovdatta: (Addressing Grandfather) Grandfather, why are you standing there like a statue, folding your hands? I feel very nervous. Are these good signs that we see? Why are they darkening my room? What is the use of the star-light?

Grandfather: Keep quiet unbeliever! Don't talk anymore.

Shudha Enters

Shudha: Amal!

Doctor: He is asleep.

Shudha: I have brought some flowers for him- can't I give them to him?

Doctor: Alright, give the flowers.

Shudha: When will he get up?

Doctor: Right now, when will the king call him?

Shudha: Would you mind whispering a word in his ear?

Doctor: What word?

Shudha: Tell him, "Shudha still remembers him".

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