

SPOTLIGHT

The bard's lost muse

Kadambari came into my life only a few years back on a dull wintry afternoon of 2015. I was looking for a good Bengali movie and there they were, Konkona Sen Sharma and Parambrata Chatterjee, on the shelves of the video store, guised as Kadambari and Tagore.

Did not expect much from the movie at the beginning, as it was just an option to while away the hours. But somehow the movie affected me so much that even today I keep looking for Kadambari, Jorasanko, and Rabindranath at every random book house I visit.

This transparent soul from the 19th century somehow speaks more to me about love, affection, loss, and desperation than any other renowned character that I have leafed through, over the years.

Some say, her life was not as illustrious as it is portrayed in the movies or the books, while many others deny the fabled concoctions of a narrative between her and Rabindranath.

I merely shy away from the controversies because it really does not matter to me! What matters is that the loneliness she felt in her heart was real, her isolation undeniable, able to trump any unrequited love story in the first stance. At least in my eyes, it is so.

Based on accounts, Kadambari was only 10 years old when she entered the Tagore residence as the wife of Jyotirindranath Tagore, and her brother in law Rabindranath was two years younger to her.

"I remember Notun Bouthan with her thin gold bangles and tender dark wrists...I also remember circling from afar, afraid to come close.... She was enthroned at the centre of affection and I was only a neglected, insignificant child."

— Chelebela (Boyhood by Rabindranath Tagore)

