

MARQUESS CURZON OF KEDLESTON

LATIFUL QUADER

the following native petition:

Lord Curzon

My learned friend with mere wind from a

Henry got to hear things about Anne, and she had her head cut off though the things were not true, for she had but a little neck. Henry was left a widow, but he soon got married again- this time it was to Jane Seymour. He liked Jane Seymour, she had a son a few days after she died. So Henry was a widow again, and he married another Anne; this time Anne Cleves this Anne he did not like, for she was floundering mare, and not Pretty so he sent her away again and gave her some gold to life upon without him, while he got married to another Katherine Howard. She was not a very good wife, and Henry got to hear things again as he did before - so she had her head cut off, and he married Katherine Parr who looked after his bad legs.'

both or either of them to her advantage, particularly when it concerns her self- image, which she frequently practices with certain tact, as and when it suits her.

Keeping up the pretence with Niladri these days, after her engagement with him, is of pre-eminent importance. At least, until Niladri's sister Sreya and her husband Shouvik come to Dhaka next month from USA, when they will meet her for the first time; until Borodri (Kobita) and Rishit and Kanta arrive from Dubai to bless Niladri; but foremost, until the day the god of fire has witnessed them moving round and round in circles until the count of seven, while one end of her Benarasi is kept knotted tightly with one end of Niladri's dhoti.

Till then Niladri should be cocooned to remain in the dark about certain facts. Or rather should be in a state of hazy twilight-zone like stupor, so that when the truth eventually surfaces, or allowed to be known, there are all covering plausible explanations. That Ovi has scored miserably in his IELTS and doing his MBA in 'The Harvard University of Bangladesh'; and that Nirmal-babu's third brother is a compounder at a doctor's clinic at Boishali Upozilla and his only son, who is called Liltu, converted (taking the name Mossaddek Ali, Akash) to marry a Muslim girl. But they need not be seen to or seen by

notwithstanding Niladri. And essentially, that the birthday meal out will be the first time that Nirmal-babu has ever stepped inside a Chinese restaurant.

"Can you hear him from here?"

Both have agreed that he is just audible, but raising the tv volume will have them lose their conversations, and the bedroom where Niladri is now is a bit further down. Avita goes in to the sitting room: she could interfere in the conversation to change the subject, should it become necessary, or divert Hashikul's interest towards her in conversation, which would be easier, or guide back Niladri to the veranda if he wanders in the sitting room to join in the conversation. He could be a bit raw, at times, and annoyingly unassuming like that.

"You have to understand", Nirmal-babu continues with Hashikul, "It is not fully dark, rather shadowy."

"Oh?"

"Still, you can see and read the menu, that type of darkness", Nirmal-babu beams, sensing Hashikul's interest.

"I see", Hashikul murmurs.

(The first segment of this story appeared on Saturday before last. To be continued)