

felt truly happy. Now, she didn't even utter a single word.

Mitul wasn't the only one who he had shocked today. Shornali was infuriated when he said he would take a leave from office and pick Mitul up from school. She thought he was only joking and it took him quite a while to convince her that he actually meant to do so. He thought of how big a gulf had formed between him and his family and it broke his heart.

The last few years had been tough. He had been promoted to a higher post in the NGO he worked at for the first time in the fifteen years he had been there and even though the pay was slightly better, the workload had doubled. He would leave home every morning before Mitul was up and would come back long after she had fallen asleep, and he couldn't remember the last time they had all sat

together and had dinner or just had a meaningful conversation. He knew there was no way he could quit. He was the bread-earner of the family after all. There was no way he could take a break either, for he was sure he would be replaced as soon as he did. But he'd like the way things were going with his family to change. And he'd like them to change fast.

Mitul dashed inside as soon as the maid opened the door to their flat. She made her way to the kitchen in a frantic rush where her mother was supposed to be. Ratul heard them talking for a while, before she went to her room without even looking at him. He headed towards the kitchen himself, past the dining room and stopped by the sink next to the refrigerator. He checked his reflection on the little square mirror above it and smiled. The dips in his cheeks made the forty-five year old look like a

toddler.

Shornali was busy peeling potatoes over the kitchen counter while the maid sat on her haunches, trying to scrub off a stubborn mark on the floor. Ratul leaned against the counter and cleared his throat. His wife looked up at him questioningly and when he said nothing, he could see her confusion turn to a subtle anger. "What?" she asked slowly.

Ratul smiled from ear to ear. His sudden expression turned her anger into sheer surprise. Her eyes widened and she looked at the maid and then back at him.

"What do you think of my dimples?"

He watched his wife's cheeks turn a rosy red. The maid broke into a hoot of laughter and scurried out of the kitchen.

"What?" his wife asked again, her voice softer this time. She made an

attempt to look sombre but failed miserably.

"I asked you what you think of my dimples," Ratul said, and then grinned again.

Shornali set the peeler on the counter top. She looked back at Ratul who was grinning like a child about to ride a colossal. She walked over closer to where he stood and stared at his face. Ratul could feel a bead of sweat trickle down the side of his cheek. He wondered if he should stop grinning and run away, when she covered her mouth and let out a small chuckle. This was the first time he had heard her laugh in a long time, and he treasured the sound of it.

"You silly man!" she slapped his left shoulder playfully and dashed past him out of the kitchen, giggling.

Ratul stood there scratching his head and smiling like a goof. Maybe, dimples were kind of cute.

WORDPLAY

Quietly her well-crafted words took over.
 I couldn't recall the last time
 a voice plagued me as much as hers;
 They evoked in my thoughts like a serenade
 that was meant to be endeared.
 The calm bearing of her eloquence
 ensnared an irrefutable aroma
 To which my thoughts lay bare in bewilderment -
 Her elegance was more than I could bear.
 Was it her eyes that spoke more
 Or perhaps her lips that evermore
 conceded a smile bent like the crescent moon,
 restrained and subtle.

Let me be the air of your words
 Forever drenched in conversations,
 Let my lips hover over yours,
 pretending to touch
 Immersed in rushed emotions and ineffable desires;
 Let them remind me how a lover dreams
 For it has been long -
 and I have long forgotten
 how it feels to fall in love.

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What Did Benjen Do?

BENJAMIN HASAN

The clock bell rang
 And Benjen rose
 The smock fell; Lang!
 And Benjen froze

The day was new
 The face was too

The doorbell rang
 And Benjen ran
 The milkman came
 Benjen too

What happened then,
 When knew his friend?

A rock fell; Dang!
 And Benjen froze
 The doctor gave
 Benjen a brew

What happened then,
 When knew his girl?

A house fell down.
 And Benjen chose:
 The blind girl's lame
 But she will do

The day was new
 But Benjen? No.

Thus died he,
 A rock froze still.

