

Sense is Non-Negotiable

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“Love is the seventh sense, it destroys all six senses.”

This quote gains mutual agreement in all generations. Many star-crossed lovers like Romeo and Juliet lost their senses before they actually lost their lives but who can blame them? Decisions made in the spur of moment, countless sacrifices, emotional dependence, obsession, mood swings... All are a part of life’s most dangerous game called love.

David Azariah is the chairman of a renowned company. He is a cold fish with a handsome outlook and wealth worthy of envy in high society. On the other hand, Rebecca Paedhru is a smart and hardworking research scholar who is known to be simple and well-natured. In her perspective, ambition does not have brakes and wealth is an endless path. Imagine the astonishment caused by the news of their upcoming marriage!

Arranged marriages were a common occurrence in their country so there were no gasps of bewilderment or any other melodrama involved in the occurrence. However, nothing can be more enticing for gossipers than a man and woman; distinct as iron and plastic in their personality and views; being joined in matrimony. The anticipation of a troubled marriage followed by a divorce procedure was undeniably promising.

Regardless, David was smitten by the pragmatic lass who possessed a hidden yet impeachable sweetness. No great desire had ever overtaken him than to have her as his wife. Rebecca was taken by the sincerity in the man’s eyes and his respect for her was no mere pretence. For two people who were about to make a life-altering decision like marriage, this couple were quite patient; they took their sweet time to develop trust in their compatibility. For all those who wish to find a suitable partner, place your trust in personality rather than demeanour since the latter always changes with regard to person and situation. It may seem like the discovery of Atlantis has more probability but ‘what is life without a gamble?’

So in the month when peonies bloom, David Azariah and Rebecca Paedhru joined together in holy matrimony. They resided in a multistorey apartment where all houses looked grand with the same exterior design and every household were indifferent to each other beyond comparison. In defiance of their divergence and initial shortcomings, the blossoming of love was persistent.

One evening, David arrived home looking stressed.

“Is something wrong?” asked Rebecca after the usual greetings.

“I have to go on an overseas business trip,” he explained wearily, “the Advanced Design Division, located there, is facing a certain crisis that demands my presence. How was your day?”

“The supervisor finally gave his stamp of approval for my data collection; Thank goodness, I will be at ease for awhile,” She declared with glee, “David, when will you be back?”

“Next week on Friday or Saturday at the latest,” David said with sigh, slumping against the cushions.

“Next Friday...then when will you be leaving?” asked Rebecca.

“My flight is scheduled to leave tomorrow,” he promptly announced.

Today is Tuesday, he will be gone for ten days!

“Oh...Really...” Rebecca trailed off.

“Yes, Becca?”

“Eh, nothing, Nothing at all,” she said and quickly turned to her study.

Early morning, waves of unfamiliar emotion swept over the couple undeterred by their attempts to keep things light hearted as possible.

“Take care of your health,” said Rebecca in earnest, “Make sure to dress warm, the weather forecast claimed it would be cold there.”

“Yes, yes.” replied David as he checked his appearance in the full-length mirror.

“Make sure to eat well; don't skip meals no matter what, caprese?”

“Yes, yes.” he repeated.

“Oh, and make sure to eat *guises de grenouilles* for breakfast every day,” quipped Rebecca.

“Eh?” exclaimed David, dumbfounded. Why in the world should he eat frog legs?

“Ah, so you were listening,” said Rebecca with a teasing smile.

David sighed and reached for his holdall beside her.

Without any intimidation, Rebecca placed her hands on his shoulders and held tightly. She purposefully avoided kept her head down and avoided eye contact.

“Do you really...have to leave?” She asked in a desolate voice.

David smiled and lowered his gaze to meet Rebecca's downcast eyes; in response to this gesture, she instantly looked up at ceiling then the wall on his second attempt.

“Come along, won't you?” He asked passionately.

Startled, Rebecca looked at *him* this time. Blush crept across her cheeks and a sweet smile appeared on her lips. He just stared in awe... The moment was so precious to him.

After a pause, she replied, "I had just begun scaling for my thesis so I'd rather not distract myself. Besides, I doubt you will have time for me when you have to handle a crisis."

"Surely I could make time for my dear wife," David said as he grabbed the holdall and slung it over his shoulder.

"Please take care of yourself," she simply said and handed over his briefcase.

There will always be times when one is forced to choose between their heart's desires and priorities in life and eventually, the right decision would always mean sacrifice of the other choice. Regardless of this newfound love, sadness and longing; they had respective duties to be fulfilled and neither of them were oblivious to this fact. A few hours later, David had left the country while Rebecca was busy with her research.

Within days, the poor chairman went from sulking over the lack of his wife's company to feeling guilty for calling her at ungodly hours given to crisis management. Even with his hectic schedule, David did not fail to notice Rebecca was quite distracted by something at times during their phone conversation and never had she taken the initiative to call him. When he returned home on Saturday with a bouquet of red roses; to his surprise, she hugged him tightly yet avoided his gaze.

Life resumed in the same routine prior to his departure but Rebecca was busy on a constant scale and when they actually spent time together, she would space out more than once...her gaze fell on her phone every five seconds or so. There were times when he caught her with abnormally red eyes and a runny nose as she had wailed but some vague excuse like 'an allergic reaction' were given then. Phone addiction is common these days, he was aware, but why would someone panic at the sound of a message tone or incoming voice call? This situation reached its climax when David received a call from the University that his wife had collapsed.

At the clinic, David was already sitting on the foot of the single bed, meddling with something, when Rebecca gained consciousness. They exchanged their usual greeting as a couple but the former had a cold mien which Rebecca found unsettling then she noticed the phone in his hand actually belonged to her.

"What happened while I was gone, Becca?" he asked.

She looked conflicted for a moment but eventually, sighed and gave a weary smile.

"My cousin came to the University the day after you left and demanded two million," she explained, "First, I thought it was a quip because with my profession as a research assistant, such large sum is beyond my reach but she was just too persistent so I told her to scram. Ever since then, I've been receiving certain pictures and videos that are quite... disturbing with a message that the same would happen to me. I've blocked twelve numbers so far yet they keep coming from different numbers. I got an opportunity to prepare a research paper for an upcoming conference; I had no time to deal with this."

“Why didn’t you report this, Becca?” David asked, slowly.

“I didn’t want to bother you and they were threats made with firm evidence so it will be not be an issue if I dealt with it later on.”

“But it affected your mental health to the point that you wore yourself, Becca. Why didn’t you tell me?” he asked, softly.

“All my life, I’ve worked hard to achieve my goals. I couldn’t see the need to depend on someone...But I cannot go on like this, can I?”

She smiled warmly at the end of her sentence, David placed a hand on her cheek and said, “You can’t because I will always be the lookout for you, my dear wife, even though your strength shines brightly in your eyes.”

She blushed upon hearing his words but a dreadful realization about the past few days struck her.

“David, during this time, I was anomalous. Did you not get the impression of something immoral?” Rebecca asked, although she dreaded the answer.

“Well, I am nothing if not sensible,” he declared bluntly, “You were panic stricken whenever you received a message and made no attempt to conceal the emotion, regardless of my presence. As for the rest, the position of a student is not the same as a professional especially in work style, I married you knowing that fact.

“Golly, do I feel honoured,” she muttered as he chuckled.

Two days later, a lawsuit was filed for extortion and transmission of material depicting extreme physical abuse.

Love like a flower which blooms on its own accord despite the fulfillment of all the care necessary; when left abandoned, it will wither away. If one tried to force their way on the bud in impatience, anger or even curiosity, the flower will be destroyed. When the flower bloomed, its beauty must be protected from harm. To understand and abide these obligations, the utmost requirement is sense. Love is the seventh sense it requires the functioning of all six senses!