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Cute Servant-Maid

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Charms and skills are not the monopoly of any one belonging to the class of the rich and the educated. Any one of any class can have charms and skills irrespective of their economic highs and lows and social statuses and levels.

There was a servant-maid with all those charms and skills and she was better than the rich and the educated in all respects. She was none other than Aparna with a little education. By birth, she had all excellent features and eminent skills but she was born in a poor family.

Aparna looked dignified in manners and beautiful in features. She had excellent communication skills. Her soft skills were appreciable and enjoyable. Her all appeared as if she had learnt all the extraordinary skills and charming manners. She had all exceedingly impressive features in addition.

Aparna married a boy who was working on daily wages in an office. His income was very less. It became very essential for her to work in some houses as a servant-maid to run the circus of her family economically. She was very obedient and skillful in her work. All liked the style and the skill of her working. Her work was neat and tidy. All appreciated her sincerity and hard work in household chores and neatness and cleanliness in housekeeping. All wanted her to work in their houses but her limited time allowed her to work in some houses, as she was sincere and regular in her work. She wanted to work in their houses permanently.

Aparna and her husband Rajiv, were sincere and hard working. After some years, by taking a loan, they constructed a house in the colony where she was working.

Aparna worked in only some houses as not to spoil her reputation since she was regular in her work. As per the time available, she worked only in some houses. Moreover, she wanted her children-- a son and a daughter-- to study well. She admitted her children in an English medium school like others. She taught her children whatever she knew. Her husband, Rajiv who was working on daily wages was devoting his time for teaching the children. The children were very brilliant. They were standing first in their classes.

Aparna was reading books to enrich her knowledge like her husband. All felt them made for each other as they were born for each other.

Work was worship for Aparna. She worshipped work in the heart of her heart though it was in others' houses or in her house. She did not receive any complaints but all compliments from the houses for her sincerity, punctuality and regularity in her work. Apart from salary, they offered her old saris, old things, tips, gifts and food items to please her though she did not ask them to do so. They offered and she just received them humbly.

Aparna looked dignified in her appearance though she wore old or simple costumes. Sometimes the wives of the rich were jealous of her beauty. Everyone spoke to her directly and barefacedly,

'You look very dignified and beautiful even in the old sari that I gave you to wear... When I wore the sari, I was not so dignified and beautiful like you...'

'You all like me very much...I appear so to the people whoever like me...I am an ordinary woman,' said Aparna to them modestly.

'You would have gone to the film field to act as a heroine. You look very charming even in the old dress...You are lucky to have excellent features, ' said Meenakshi, the wife of a realtor.

'I do not deserve so, as I am not educated highly...I discontinued my studies as I belonged to a poor family...,' said Aparna in response to Minakshi's comment.

'Where did you learn how to wear the sari...? The style of your wearing is excellent and super. Your appearance is

very appealing,' said Gopika, the wife of a noted contractor.

'It is simple...If we take some care, we can wear so gracefully...We should spend some time for that...,' said Aparna.

'The people in the colony feel that I am not dignified...I look like a servant-maid...but you do not...Though I wear rich, costly costumes, I do not appear like you... What should I do to look like you...?' said Ranimalinidevi.

'You think so...We should have dress sense. We should take care of wearing a variety of attires...We should be neat and tidy... You use only two saris to wear the either of them even though you have hundreds of saris. You generally wear them on the occasions of functions. Life is beautiful...We should be happy... We should also make thers happy by our appearance and communication. You can wear all the saris whatever you have... You can wear your Sunday best on occasions. This is what I do and that is what you do not do...This is my principle...That is your principle...,' said Aparna.

Yashoda, the wife of a big landowner was very jealous of Aparna. The landowner observed her attentively all the time while she was working in her house. She murmured to her one day when she was at work,

'Even in poverty, you are much beautiful and very delightful, how is it possible, to you, Aparna...?' said Aparna.

'There is nothing special...,' said Aparna.

'You are after all a servant-maid to work in some houses...There is something special,' said the wife of millionaire's wife to Aparna, as she felt very jealous of her beauty.

'Yes, like you all I am a woman...a servant-maid with something special. A woman should be in pursuit of elegance and excellence. As a woman and mother in a family, I look into the future with a ladder for me to step up or scale towards excellence while being in elegance,' said Aparna.

'You are greater than we all, for you look dignified even in simple costumes,' said Amritha, the wife of a cloth merchant.

'It is not the dress that makes one dignified...See I am an ordinary woman to make others happy by my sincerity... I should never hurt anybody's feelings. It is my principle...my utmost principle,' said Aparna and left the group of gossiping women, bearing a hearty smile.

'Aparna is a cute servant-maid...We cannot compete with her,' said all the women who used to spend their valuable time in gossiping.

All the women raised their eyebrows high at the sight of Aparna. Were they encouraging her in true sense?

Days passed to keep the deserving people in the deserving position. Aparna was trying her best to promote her position. She was prepared to achieve what she had lost in the past because of poverty.

All the women still raised their eyebrows when Aparna promoted her position by improving her qualifications. As she used to participate in dancing competitions in her school days, she learnt dancing and singing in one of the houses for her work. She became a music and dance teacher in a famous school. The school authorities offered her a handsome salary. She stopped to work in the houses as a servant-maid. Her children were pursuing their studies successfully.

The Prime Minister started the Swachha Bharath programme. In view of this programme, the people of the colony wanted to prove their best in support of the programme as they supported it whole-heartedly. All made up their minds to keep their houses and their surroundings neat and tidy. They also made it a point for well housekeeping as well. They had committees formed at the national level in this regard in the execution of the programme.

There were a hundred houses in the colony. The women were very competitive in well housekeeping. They kept all household things in their possible ways. A committee was ready to visit the colony and offer awards to the dwellers especially women for keeping household things orderly and comly and house interiors and surroundings clean and tidy while maintaining conjugal relations.

In the competition, on a Sunday as per schedule the panel of judges was ready to assess the orderliness and cleanliness both inside and outside of the dwellings in the colony. The panel was very particular about the conjugal,

cordial relations between husband and wife in their offer of awards.

The awards were ready for the best family in the colony. The cordial relation of the couple, their well housekeeping, the beautiful gardening in the surroundings and all the essential qualities of a model house irrespective of their riches and statuses, highs and lows. The dwellers were eagerly waiting for the awards given by the committee.

All the panel members visited all the hundred houses to assess the houses and the couples as per the principles evolved by the committee.

As it was Sunday, in some houses the couples and their children were in their relaxing mood. In some houses, the couples woke up late. They were brushing their teeth at the time of the panel visit.

In some houses, the dwellers did not keep their houses neat and tidy, as the servant-maids did not come. They were waiting for them to come and sweep the surroundings of their houses.

The gates of some houses were not open. They did not unlock and open the gates. They were in their bed.

In some houses, the couples were late in having their bath. They did not come out to welcome the panel.

The panel was unhappy to find the houses and the dwellers in them discouraging. In the houses they visited, they told the panel that it would start visiting the houses

from the first one in the other corner as their houses were bearing the numbers from fifty to eighty.

In some of the houses, the couples received the panel in a careless way. They were in their informal dresses.

In some houses, all things were disorderly and untidy. The panel found newspapers, towels, caps, kerchiefs and all kinds of dresses in the sofas of their houses. The panel did not see the other rooms in the houses as they expected the same disorder and untidiness in them.

In some of the houses, the couples had just woken up. They came out to receive the panel while they were brushing their teeth. They rose late from bed when the panel rang the calling bell three times at the gate.

The couples in some houses asked the panel to wait at the gate and were keeping the things in the order then. The panel did not enter the house. It went to the other house.

The panel felt stunned in some houses when it found the kitchen dirty and dusty. The utensils, the plates and all were in the sink, waiting for someone to clean them. They did not feel like cleaning them. They had had coffee and left the cups on the table. There were various kinds of articles like pens, pencils, combs, brushes, teacups, saucers, needles, threads, toothpaste, dolls, scissors and all on the dining table. It all appeared 'a store room on the table' to their surprise.

The panel heard some sound in some houses. The couples in them were fighting on an issue. They were shouting at each other. They silenced themselves when the panel

arrived. The panel did not feel like entering the houses. They left the houses without visiting them.

The members of panel felt extremely sorry for most of the members of the families were not able to impress them. They felt discouraged, as their housekeeping was not good, not proper, not clean and not orderly. They found their houses with their surroundings also untidy and disorderly.

When the panel visited the house of Aparna and Rajiv, the plants with all kinds of flowers in full bloom welcomed its members at the threshold. They dressed in a neat manner and were ready invite the panel at the gate. They opened the gate and welcomed the panel with suitable gestures. The surroundings were very neat and tidy. They lead the panel to the drawing room, the living hall, dining room, kitchen and the bedrooms. Everything was clean, orderly and systematic. The house was pleasing. Their manners were appealing. It was the abode of peace. They introduced all the parts of the house to the panel in a polite manner. They were cordial in their approach and friendly in their dealing with the panel.

All the panel members of the committee selected Aparna and Rajiv to be the best couple in all respects: their conjugal relation, their house full of cleanliness and all the household things in orderliness. All were pleasing them apart from cleanliness and orderliness in their house. They received the panel cordially unlike others. They treated them as their most welcome guests.

The panel submitted a list of suggestions to the members of families in the colony for their future guidance in all respects while appreciating the best:

"The members of a family should not be lazy. They should wake up early though it is a holiday. They should brush their teeth, have bath and wear neat dresses even though they are in their houses. They should keep all household things in all rooms like drawing room, living hall, dining hall and kitchen in the apple pie order. They should maintain good relations to enjoy peace. Their house should be a sweet home. They should follow the principles: sincerity, hard work, regularity and punctuality. They should not postpone their activities, their plans and all. They should realize that the most important thing is time. Time is money. Time is not just money but also everything that keeps them awake to the realities of life. They should have therefore time consciousness. Orderliness is appealing to the eye and cleanliness is refreshing to the senses. Hence, they should mind it in all respects. Home is the dwelling of peace for them as life is beautiful...

"Aparna and Rajiv are ideal in all respects. They proved to be the best couple in their peaceful, simple dwelling. The panel recommended them as the best couple for an award. It also recommended Aparna for the best woman award on the eve of the women's day next. She deserves all appreciation."

In the coming years, Aparna got a chance to act in a film based on music and dance. She acted in the movie and got the prestigious Nandi award at the national level.

Apart from the award, the jury selected Aparna as the best woman award for her rising from the servant-maid to the best dancer. It bestowed the award on her on the eve of the Women's Day. It was lifetime achievement award to bring credit to her.

Aparna received the award with all pride and came back. She landed at the Shamshabad airport. All the women received her with all respects at the airport.

The next day all the newspapers featured Aparna's name in the headlines. All appreciated her for outstanding qualities as woman especially as wife to her partner and as mother to her children who settled abroad. She only said referring to her progress and success,

"My husband, Rajiv is great in guiding me to reach my most cherished goal."

All the women who underrated Aparna bowed their heads in utter shame.



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