

THE HOSPITAL

For Prof. D.P. Bhatnagar

With best compliments-


N.R.

By
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M.A., M. Phil., Ph. D., P.G.C.T.E.

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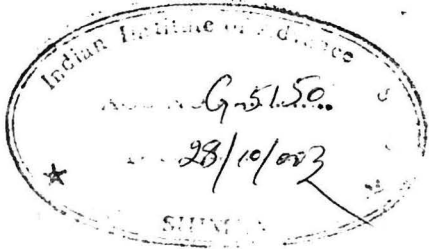


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Publisher

Other Books of the Author

- Triumph of Love
- My Offerings to Thee, My Lord
- Love and Life
- Negligent Scholar
- Legacy
- The Betel Leaf and Image
- Malfi Rani
- Faustus

Place : Radha Memorial Hospital.

Time : The Winter

CHARACTERS

Dr. Bugg, MRCP (London)

Dr. Ramulu

Lamba ... Lecturer

Deepak ... Student

Anil ... Student

Hussain ... Student

Lakshmi ... Nurse

Suggie ... A Chinese Student

Manzoor ... A Ward boy

Others.

SCENE - 1

(Radha Memorial Hospital. Time 10 a. m. Dr. Bugg is seated in his chair, testing the patients in the out-patient ward. A few post-graduate students are around him, also testing other patients and observing their boss intermittently. Lamba, aged thirty six, a Lecturer in a University, enters in to get admitted to the Hospital. He has already consulted Dr. Bugg at his home and payed him Rupees Twenty Five as the consultation fee.)

Dr. Bugg : An Indian would spend a rupee on a cup of tea rather than on a book,

Lamba : (entering) Good morning, Doctor.

Dr. Bugg : Good morning (restless) come in. Please sit down.

Lamba : (sitting) Thank you.
(The medicos get wondered).

Dr. Bugg : I wonder how could you reach the hospital so early. Did you come by a rick ?

Lamba : (submissively), Oh, no. Sir, I have come by walk.

Dr. Bugg : Oh, I see I was just thinking of you. Did you go to see Dr. Ramchander ?

Lamba : Yes, Yes.

Dr. Bugg : What did he say ?

Lamba : He charged me ten rupees.

Dr. Bugg : (irritated) Say, what did he tell you ? Give me a direct answer.

- Lamba : He tested my eyes. He is an ophthalmologist, no ?
- Dr. Bugg : (more irritated) I know, I know. Give me a direct reply. No Indian gives a direct reply. Say, what was his report ?
- (the medical students laugh).
- Lamba : Yes, Yes. He said I have diplopia. I know I have diplopia.
- Dr. Bugg : I know that you are a patient of diplopia. But what is the complaint ?
- Lamba : I have double vision. seeing everything in twos.
- Dr. Bugg : Vertically, or horizontally ?
- Lamba : (puzzled) Both.
(the medical students laugh further)
- Dr. Bugg : My God ! Come here. This side, nearer. Look at my fingers. This way, that way, up down (Lamba moves his eyes following the movement of Bugg's fingers)
What is your general ailment ?
- Lamba : I am a patient of amoebiasis. It is in an acute stage. Some doctors said that the amoeba, a single celled organism, has migrated to my blood from my intestines and finally to the brain.
- Dr. Bugg : (Laughs) See the knowledge of our medicos.
(The medical students burst into laughter). What was the opinion of Dr. Ramchander ?
- Lamba : He said he was unable to make out anything. The double vision could be due to amoebiasis, diabetes, sixth nerve palsy or meningitis.

- Dr Bugg : Exactly. He was perfectly right. Is your neck stiff ?
You move it.
- Lamba : (moving his neck) It cannot go beyond this (He gives a posture bending his neck).
- Dr. Bugg : (to his students) This is a case of meningitis.
The patient says that he cannot move his neck easily.
Why not we perform L. P. ?
- Lamba : What is L. P. Sir ?
- Dr. Bugg : It is Lumbar puncture. We will take out the fluid from
your vertebral column and send it to the laboratory.
- Lamba : (horrified) For Heaven's sake don't do it. It will
worsen my general health.
- Dr. Bugg : (inducing) Please give a little fluid. I am telling you
in your own interest.
- Lamba : (afraid) No, Sir, please. Don't take out the fluid.
- Dr. Bugg : (Firmly) I have to take out the fluid. Otherwise I
cannot give you treatment. Manzoor, come here.
Hold him tight.
(Manzoor, a ward boy, a sturdy fellow of 27 comes
ahead).
- Lamba : (further terrified) please doctor, don't take out fluid.
I cannot withstand the pain. It will break my waist.
- Monzoor : (to Lamba). No sir, it wont, harm you. It will be just
like pricking a pin in your body.
(The doctor comes forward and Lamba runs amuck)
- Lamba : Doctor Sir, if you want to give treatment give.
Otherwise...
- Dr. Bugg : (Coaxing) please, help us. I want to publish a
research paper. You are an intellectual. This research
shall help hundreds.

Lamba : (pleading) But why do you make me a scapegoat for your research? There are hundreds who come for treatment by you ?

Dr. Bugg : If everybody says the same, how shall we publish a paper ?
(the other doctors also move a little ahead to catch hold of Lamba and take out the fluid, Lamba becomes more stubborn and his reaction creates a scene for the other patients. Dr. Bugg feels-guilty Manzoor withdraws).

Lamba : Sir, I shall go away. Doesn't matter for the fees, that I paid you yesterday.

Dr. Bugg : See, unless I come to a conclusion I can't give a systematic treatment.

Lamba : At least give me a symptomatic treatment.

Dr. Bugg : (hesitantly) All right. You do one thing. Go to Dr. Ramchander and get his report.

Lamba : He has given me this report. It is inconclusive after taking Rr. 25/- from me. He referred the case to you.

Dr. Bugg : (seeing the report) Doesn't matter. This time you get the skull X-ray. Go to Radium Clinic of Dr. Ambica.

Lamba : This's the report. I paid her Rs. 30/- and she gave me a report of NAD.

Dr. Bugg : Did she take both oblong and lateral ?

Lamba : Yes, Doctor.

Dr. Bugg : (confused) I must refer you to Preetum Pathological Laboratory. You must have Glucose Test.

Lamba : Sir, they have already done it. They made me drink one beakerful of Glucose water and tested my urine.

Dr. Bugg : What is the percentage of sugar ?

Lamba : Sugar nil.

Dr. Bugg : Both fasting and post lunch ?

Lamba : Yes Doctor, this is the report, and they charged me Rs. 10/- for urine test.

Dr. Bugg : Leave it. Expenditure is nothing. The treatment is more important. I will write for blood sugar test. Bring me your outpatient ticket.

Lamba : Excuse me sir, I have got done that also. Both Fasting and post-lunch.

Dr. Bugg : (seeing the report) What devil you are ! You' vedone that also. Did you eat ynur full meal before you had that test ?

Lamba : Yes Sir, bellyful like an ass.

Dr. Bugg : Don't use similes and metaphos. Tell me plainly.

Lamba : (stressing) Yes Doctor. I have eaten, chapatis, rice, curds everything. But I am afraid, I am losing all my blood only in tests.

Dr. Bugg : Don't be stingy for blood. You have plenty in your veins.

Lamba : (complacent) I have all the reports, ready. please give me prescription.

Dr. Bugg : No, no, Mr. Lamba. I must form an opinion before I start the treatment. I will admit you as an in-patient tomorrow. You get the G. T. T Report

Lamba : What is G. T. T. Sir ?

Dr. Bugg : (angrily) This is the trouble with the educated patients. It is Glucose Tolerance test, takes three hours. But it is an accurate test. For the time being you use Surbex-T and Doloneurobian.

Lamba : Why Surbex-T, Doctor ?

Dr. Bugg : It will restore your Vitamin-A.

Lamba : Is it due to Vitamin-A deficiency ?

Dr. Bugg : You leave it to me. It is not your botheration. I am sure you don't have brain tumours.

Lamba : Then what could be the reason for my diplopia ?

Dr. Bugg : It must be due to obesity.

Lamba : What is obesity ?

Bugg : Shall I tell you that also ? You stupid.

(Curtain)

SCENE - 2

(Two days later the University ward in the Hospital. Dr. Bugg enters accompanied by a Junior Doctor called Ramulu when Lamba is on the cot. He is looking through only one eye closing another eye).

Dr. Bugg : Where is your care-sheet Mr.....?

Lamba : (rising up) Here it is.

Dr. Bugg : (writing something) Where is your G.T.T. Report ?

Lamba : This Is the report (He hands it over to Dr. Bugg).

Dr. Bugg : (reading) First reading is nil, second reading is nil, third reading is trace, fourth reading is nil. (To Dr. Ramulu) He is a diabetic, he is a diabetic, he is a diabetic.

Lamba : (nervous) Why am I a diabetic ?

Dr. Bugg : Because the G.T.T. report says it is so. you are a confirmed diabetic.

Lamba : How about it ?

Dr. Bugg : Your polyurination and the G.T.T. Report.

Dr. Ramulu : (interfering) Yes, Yes, there is no doubt about it.

Dr. Bugg : But this can be cured by strict diet. Right ?

Lamba : What diet shall I take in ?

Dr. Bugg : There is a diet chart prepared by me. Follow it strictly. Morning in the breakfast one Phulka or one slice with a cup of sugarless milk. In your lunch you must take in two chapatis a little curds and vegetables. You can take one apple at three o' clock. In the

evening you must take two phulkas or chapatis. Avoid sugar completely. Take two cupfulls of dal every day.

Lamba ; Shall I continue those drugs ?

Dr. Bugg : You can continue, the same Surbex-T and Doloneur-obian. You must reduce your weight. For that matter you don't take the evening meal.

Lamba : of late I have developed pain in the chest.

Dr. Bugg : (impatient) Ah, you! All complications. Is it from left to right? or from right to left ?

Lamba : (confused) Sir, Doctor. Sometimes this side, and sometimes that side.

Dr. Bugg : Don't worry. I will get the ECG tomorrow.

Lamba : Please give me something for amoebiasis.

Dr. Bugg : Don't worry about the amoebiasis. The diabetes is more important than the amoebiasis. It will subside (He takes a pen and writes something on a piece of paper).

Lamba : (Taking it) will it subside ?

Dr. Bugg : I hope so (Dr. Bugg leaves the ward.)

(The co-patients in the ward are Deepak and Hussain, and Anil. They are students. Suggie is a Chinese girl studying medicine' a frequent visitor to the ward).

Lamba : Thank Heavens. The doctor has been kind enough to prescribe some medicine.

Deepak : I don't think you have any disease.

Lamba : My trouble is I am seeing everything in twos.

Deepak : This is due to colour blindness.

- Lamba : What is your ailment ?
- Deepak : My ankle is fractured while playing the Football.
- Lamba : How long you are going to stay here ?
- Deepak : I think I will have to stay 10 days more. Even though I can't walk without crutches my doctor has said he would discharge me after ten days. Then I will have to fly to Agartala.
- Suggie : (interfering) Excuse me. Deepak is a good football player in the whole medical college. We both are classmates. I was shouting hurrah when he was playing. Poor man broke his leg.
- Lamba : I see, you are also a student of medicine.
- Suggie : Yes we are all. You know that Deepak is lonely. He needs an attendant.
- Deepak : So she is helping.
- Lamba : Still you are lucky. You have a sincere friend at least. (Suggie is pleased and laughs merrily)
- Hussain : (Carefully watching) Sir, he is fortunate to have one friend at least. I don't have anybody to care for me.
- Lamba : How is that ?
- Hussain : I am a student of Engineering. I don't have anybody to look after me. I have deodonal ulcer.
- Lamba : What is the complaint ?
- Hussain : Severs pain in the abdomen. I can't take in rice except milk. Every fourth day, I have to stand in the Queue to get Barium x-ray. They make me drink that horrible liquid and take an x-ray photograph.
- Lamba : Your doctor is much irritating type.
- Hussain : He is a short-tempered sincere man they say. I didn't pay him anything.

- Lamba : Where is the money to pay him? After all you are a student.
- Hussain : Correct Sir, I am a poor student. But it makes no difference for them.
- Lamba : Still you must be grateful to your doctor. He has admitted you here atleast.
- Hussain : Thank God. But the problem is with these nurses and ward boys. They steal away my belongings, bread and milk.
- Lamba : (laughing ironically) So is the case with me, last evening the ward boy stole away my chapatis, Every time he wants tipping.
- Hussain : (Scornfully), Sir, you see that nurse. who comes in the morning. She dose not give me injection although I wait on her half an hour.
- Lamba : Why ? What does she say ?
- Hussain : She says the injection is very costly. It is not available in the hospital. Neither the injections nor are the tablets available in the hospital.
- Lamba : How about your menu ?
- Hussain : Sir, it is more pitiable, They have to supply me food from the mess, See my diet chart. (he throws it to Lamba). They give me rice full of Kankar., curry full of mirchi. You know, when they supply me mutton there is no single boti in it except a little gravy.
- Lamba : (laughing) Better change to vegetarian diet.
- Hussain : It is more horrible, Sir. Even the dogs won't touch it. You have done nice. Atleast you are getting your food from your home.

- Lamba : I think these fellow steal away all the edibles from the hospital mess.
- Hussain : Nasty fellows. They steal away drugs and tablets and sell out at the medical shops. They steal away foodstuffs and fill in their bellies. They do not give treatment here. But treat the patients at their own private clinics.
- Anil : Every ward boy is an RMP outside, you know ?
- Lamba : (surprised) How is that the Government allows them ?
- Anil : These fellows have a little knowledge of diseases and their treatment. Some of them can read the care-sheets.
- Lamba : But how do they manage ?
- Anil : They obtain the permission of the municipality, get themselves registered with the indigenous Indian Medicines Department. They take away spirit bottles, bandage cloth and every damaged thing on the earth. They don't leave out even sanitary napkins.
- Lamba : Then this hospital is an accursed place. By the bye, what is your complaint ?
- Anil : While going up the staircase in my house my foot slipped. There is a fracture in my thighbone.
- Lamba : Who is your doctor, please ?
- Anil : Dr. C.S.R. I consulted him at home and paid him a hundred bucks.
- Lamba : My God ! A hundred.
- Anil : (sportively) There is no wonder Sir. Still it was less. He normally charges Two thousand rupees.

(Meanwhile, Lakshmi, a nurse of twenty five, unmarried, slim, with a round face and clad in her apron enters in. She enters the ward to go to W.C. further in, stops and reads on the entrance door written " Only for Gents" smiles and enters in. While coming back Anil's, voice stops her).

Anil : You have read that caution no, sister ?

Lakshmi : (giggling) I know, the hospital discipline is defferent from your common rules.

Anil : (keenly) Yes, yes. They must be like that to avoid feuds. (They laugh and Hussain also joins the hilarity).

Lakshmi : What is it ? How is your health ?

Anil : As usual. I am not able to stir my leg.

Lakshmi : Stirring means almost turning frome one side to another.

(She holds his both the legs and keeps them a side).

Anil : Thank you.

Lakshmi : Don't you have anybody to look after you ?

Anil : Yes I have only you. Deepak has one Suggie. That lecturer on the bed No. 4 is married., Poor man, only Hussain is unarmed.

Lakshmi : Then he must be pitied (Takes out a guava fruit and bites it off and munches it. She shows it to Lamba mischievously).

Lamba : I'm sorry. I can't see even that. The image blurrs. I have lost my sight.

Lakshmi : Pity. He has eyes, but no sight, he says. Mr. Anil, I find all this ward is full of deserted people. You don't know what love is.

- Anil : (laughing) I don't know. I know only the cow and bull relationship.
- Lakshmi : Lecturer Sir, What is love ?
- Lamba : It is only a monomania you know, man is a sexy animal.
- Lakshmi : (Unsatisfied) I can't follow your philosophy. What is your ailment Sir ?
- Lamba : I have lost my eye-sight.
- Lakshmi : Do you get any numbness in your limbs ?
- Lamba : Now and then.
- Lakshmi : Then it must be diabetis. Who is treating you ? Dr Bugg no? He is an expert of diabetis.
- Lamba : Yes of course. He has made me a diabetic. (All of them laugh) Sister, the hospital atmosphere is nauseating. The sweeper does not come in time. He doesn't sprinkle water and clean around my cot. He has hardly cleaned my spitting pan. I have developed itching sensation in my nostrils.
- Lakshmi : This is hospital, no ? These side effects will be there.
- Deepak : For all the practical purposes the hospital is a hell. (Dr Bugg accompanied by a group of students enters).
- Lamba : Good morning doctor.
- Dr. Bugg : Um, how is your health ?
- Lamba : So so.
- Dr. Bugg : Take good diet. Just look at my finger. See right, left, up, down.
(Lamba moves his eye balls)
Don't worry. There is a lot of improvement?

- Lamba : Yes, Sir. But I am getting blood while I spit.
- Dr. Bugg : (irritated) Don't worry (To Lakshmi) Sister, you take his ECG. (he writes on the care-sheet)
- Lakshmi : Right, thank you sir.
- Dr. Bugg : Are you taking in plenty of greens or not ? You must consume only greens and vegetables.
- Lamba : (curiously) Is it for the Vitamin-A, Doctor ?
- Dr. Bugg : Don't exhibit your half learning.
- Lamba : But this body is mine, no doctor ? I am responsible for my health.
- Dr. Bugg : Damn it, you are a fool.
(leaves the stage abruptly. The group of Doctors follows him.)
- Lakshmi : (sternly) Don't irritate him. Lecturer Sir.
- Lamba : What sister ? As if I don't know the fellow. He is in no way better than a mendicant.
(All of the inmates laugh. Lakshmi points and Suggie gets in with a transistor. Deepak leaning over it aside hears the music. He increases the volume).
- Suggie : It is a beautiful music. Excellent no, Deepak ?
- Deepak : Yes, Yes, marvellous.
- Lamba : What is your specialisation Suggie?
- Suggie : Gynacology.
- Deepak : That is a cunt-doctor.
- Suggie : You stupid.
(All of them laugh).
- Deepak : That is yoni-lingam relationship.

- Suggie : (angrily) You are a fool, I say.
 (Again they laugh)
 (Suggie walk out)
 (Re-enter Dr. Bugg and his followers).
- Dr. Bugg : Lamba, get ready for a demonstration, class. Tomorrow.
- Lamba : All right. Sir I am getting pain in the Cervical region, severe pain.
- Dr. Bugg : (impatiently) You are a neurotic. I say. You will die only of fear.
- Lamba : (hurt) I am also suffering from the cough and cold.
- Dr. Bugg : (Sarcastically) cough and cold, cold and cough up and down. Don't worry. It is due to the seasonal effect.
- Lamba : But sometimes the pain in the chest is unbearable.
- Dr. Bugg : Oh, no, nothing. It is due to hyperacidity, It won't harm you. Anyway we will take your ECG.
- Lamba : Sir Doctor, I am not getting sleep properly ;
- Dr. Bugg : It is called insamnia. I must give you gardinal.
- Lamba : (startled) No, Sir, I don't want gardinal.
- Dr. Bugg : At least calmpose.
- Lamba : No sir, I don't want anydrug to impose sleep. I am already restless, getting so many dreams everynight like water flowing from a tarn.
- Dr. Bugg : (laughing) It is due to indigestion. Take less food in the night. Are you following my diet chart.
- Lamba : Yes Doctor. But I have a little gastric trouble.

Dr. Bugg : Ah, that must be the reason. I can't come to your ward every day. I must shift you to MMI.

(Exit)

Deepak : (lighting a cigarette) Suggie, Suggie.

Anil : (lighting a cigarette) Don't call her, she must be angry.

Deepak : She can't. I know what she is.
(Suggie enters) Did you sulk away, my darling?

Suggie : (silent)

Deepak : Speak Suggie. Sit down on my cot.
(Suggie sits down on the cot) I know you are angry.
(He brushes her cheeks) I know your cheeks are as smooth as Decca Muslin.

Suggie : (smiling) You are very clever, Deepak, You know how to treat your friend.

Anil : Friendship is a rare gift.

Deepak : Yesterday one Kashmiri came here. The fellows were swarming at her, peering and penetrating smacking and gibbering.

Suggie : (laughs) Deepak is bluffing. It is false.

Lamba : (surprised) Which Kashmiri ? Kashmiri was only with a travel agency. Later on she was selected as an airhostess.

Suggie : Deepak uses all medical terms indiscriminately.

Lamba : Whatever it is. Deepak you will have enough time to make love. Better concentrate on your studies. It is you the students who have to set right the maladministration.

Deepak, Anil, Suggie, : Sure, sure.

Lamba : See how nasty the hospital is. There is no cleanliness, the ward boys roam about. The nurses and pharmacists steal away drugs. The doctors run away from duty and run private clinics. I think each nurse needs a chastity belt. Even then there is no guarantee. Many of them know the belly-exercise. (They all laugh exasperated).

Deepak : Why don't you lead a mission yourself ?

Lamba : True. The other day I wanted to enter Dr. C.S R.'s room the peon virtually necked me out. The patients were thronging at the door while the doctor was chatting with a girl inside.

Anil & Hussain : Pity. It is a shame to the medical profession.

Lamba : They think they are superhuman. But an LDC Won't care when they go to the DMS Office.

Anil & Hussain : Sir you didn't tell us about their Private life. They drink and gamble. No. 1 debauchees and traders of flesh.

Lamba : You know how much the Government is wasting ! One lakh Sixty thousand on each fellow.

Anil & Hussain : Sir, we are as helpless as you are.

Lamba : There are no wheel chairs and stretchers. The patients are being taken supported by two fellows on either side and sometimes on their hands.

Anil : They have to wait for hours together outside the X-ray Department.

Hussain : The blood bank is stiil worse. They sell out blood or provide by recommendation.

Lamba : Fantastically horrible. You know the reason for this pell-mell.

Hussain : The inefficiency of the Government. Each doctor is someway or other related to the Minister.

(Deepak is silent. Suggie crawls out slowly)
(Manzoor enters).

Manzoor : (Saluting) Sir, shall I get you tea ?

Lamba : Not necessary. But clean this spitting pan.

Manzoor : (To Anil) you need tea Sir ?

Anil : No, thank you.

Hussain : I don't sip the tea at all.

Manzoor : (Saluting again) All right Sir. Mr, Deepak might be discharged tomorrow.

Deepak : (curiously) who said ? How do you know ?

Manzoor : I know everything about each doctor. I overheard it. Yesterday.

Deepak : Let us see.

(Curtain)

SCENE - 3

(Male Medical Ward I. The patients are in a totally neglected condition, coughing, sneezing, spitting, snorting and grunting. This has to be shown through a screen and sound effect. Dr. Bugg and others enter).

Dr. Bugg : Are you ready for demonstration class, Mr?

Lamba : No Sir, I am getting reeling sensation.

Dr. Bugg : Don't worry. This is due to overuse of antibiotics.

Lakshmi : Sometimes it is due to over thinking also.

Lamba : Really ?

(Dr. Bugg frowns).

Dr. Bugg : Where is the ECG ?

Lakshmi : (showing the care-sheet) The ECG posted in this contains nil report Don't bother.

Lamba : Right doctor, thank you ?

Dr. Bugg : Come along, follow my finger. This way, left, right, up, down.

(Lamba moves his eye balls).

You are only a Bull in China shop. I have not come across a case like yours. Perhaps never in the medical history.

Lamba : I have also developed piles.

Dr. Bugg : See Lamba, the medicine is compartmentalized like your teaching profession. I can't give you overall package deal. I shall treat you only for diabetes.

- Lamba : Won't you cure me ?
- Dr. Bugg : The hospital is not meant for cure. It is a place of revelation. We prepare you for death when you are reluctant.
- Lamba : (desperate) But I must live.
- Dr. Bugg : You know, this body is perishable.
- Lamba : I also have cinocytes now.
- Dr. Bugg : See, how you are suffering. This is how you gradually grow towards your end.
(Forcibly Lamba is made to sit on a stool among the white aprons. Everybody is looking at him strongly as though meant for vivisection).
- Dr. Bugg : Every thing is time bound. Now start speaking one by one. Examine him carefully. Tell his symptoms and conclude the disease. One by one. You, Dr. Ramulu, first.
- Dr. Ramulu : He has meningitis because he has diplopia.
Second his cervical region is stiff.
- Lamba : (restless) I already warned you Don't tell it meningitis.
- Dr. Bugg : Be cautious.
- Lamba : I have no vomitings. What is the temperature ?
Did you ever check up my temperature ?
- Dr. Ramulu : You keep quiet. I am a doctor.
- Lamba : You are a fool. A butcher is better than you.
- Dr. Bugg : (interfering) Mr. you can't do like that. You are meant for demonstration.
- Dr. Ramulu : If that is the case this fellow is a patient of arthritis.

Lamba : Damn your diagnosis. You are a vulture. You are killing me a number of times before I am dead.

Dr. Bugg : Gentleman, will you keep quiet ? Or else we have to discharge you prematurely.

Lamba : Dr: Bajwa was far better than you. You are slow poisoning me, making me psychologically ready for death.

Dr. Bugg : (to Dr. Ramulu) Take another chance.

Dr. Ramulu : Since this fellow is an educated fool he has a slight B.P. and neurosis on the verge of mental derangement.

Dr. Bugg : Excellently well ! coming to the point. He is a neurotic with a slight effect of neurologia.

Lamba : Nothing doing. This is all humbug. (He gets up to walk out. Oiner medicos obstruct him).

Dr. Bugg : (to Lamba) Please sit down. The class is not yet over. You have to bear with this (to Dr. Ramulu) can you suggest treatment ?
(Meanwhile Manzoor enters with a pale face) Yes, What is the matter ?

Manzoor : Sir, a person is dying in your ward.

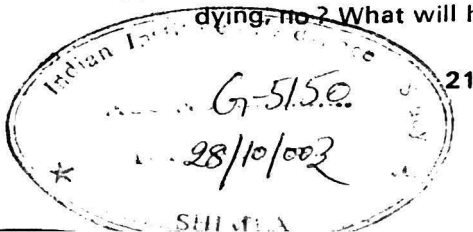
Dr. Bugg : (angrily) So what shall I do ? Men are born only to die.

Manzoor : No Sir, his relatives are waiting for you.

Dr. Bugg : How much are they going to pay ?

Manzoor : May be five hundred.

Dr. Bugg : Let them pay 1000 at least. Anyway the person is dying, no ? What will he take along with him in death ?



Monzoor : That is correct, But...

Dr. Bugg : Go and bargain. Fix up for 1000.

Monzoor : But sir, they think that you are wasting your time on this lecturer who does not pay you a single paisa.

Dr. Bugg : (frowning) Dr. Ramulu, go and bargain with those fellows. If they are ready to pay me one thousand I shall go and see him.

Dr. Ramulu : Yes, Yes.

Lamba : (aside) Thank God, I am relieved.

Dr. Bugg : (sternly) Wait a little. You have heard what the doctor has said. You must also listen what the treatment is.

(Manzoor and Dr. Ramulu leave the stage).

Lamba : All right, doctor. Give me the list of prescription.

Dr. Bugg : I don't want to prescribe any drugs. Take a little oil in your food. Take no chillies, reduce salt. You know salt is the killer of life. Don't take tamarind at all.

Lamba : But how to suit my palate.

Dr. Bugg : Otherwise die soon.

(Manzoor beckons from a little distance and he leaves quickly. Lamba runs away closing his one eye)

(Curtain)

SCENE - 4

(Next day. The University Ward. Lamba is alone) Lakshmi enters

Lakshmi : Hellow, how do you do ?

Lamba : How do you do ? Where is Deepak ?

Lakshmi : He has left. He has been discharged., and Suggie accompanied him.

Lamba : That fellow did not tell me at least ? Where is Anil ?

Lakshmi : He is the next door. Perhaps he won't return to the ward.

Lamba : And where is Hussain ?

Lakshmi : I think he ran away. He could not tolerate the humiliation caused to him.

Lamba : Poor soul ! Will Dr Bugg come today ?

Lakshmi : I dont' think. He is busy with a postmortem case.

Lamba : But in what way he is concerded with the forensic medicine ?

Lakshmi : He is every thing He will barter anything for money.

Lamba : An intelligent self-centred, dynamic rogue :

Lakshmi : (coming closer) You are alone. But I' will fill in the gap (smiles)

Lakshmi : But you are a diabetic, they say.

- Lamba** : (Hur) Damn it, who said ? that lily-livered halfeducated doctor no ? this is due to the defective administrative set up, these fellows are continuing in their jobs
- Lakshmi** : (Ogling into his eyes) Dear let us not waste our time.
- Lamba** : Right from Avicenna to Dr. Bugg the medicine has been brimmed with corruption.
- Lakshmi** : (putting her lips to his) But what are you going to do ?
- Lamba** : (kissing) Only this. But the Indian censor board will cut it off. You know Lakshmi...
(Lakshmi and Lamba laugh together)
- Lakshmi** : No dear.
- Lamba** : Last night was a terrible night. Stormy wind. no lights, and the leakage of the ceiling. The ceiling lantern in its dim light rocked like a parrot's cage. My God, horrible;
- Lakshmi** : You remembered me ? (giggles)
- Lamba** : Yes many a time.
- Lakshmi** : (Punctilious) That is love.
- Lamba** : Yes one chapter ends and another chapter begins in love.
- Lakshmi** : But it is like a bubble. It melts away into chaos.
- Lamba** : In your hospital they collect money for a death certificate and before they handover the deadbody to the relatives.
- Lakshmi** : (mum).
- Lamba** : You can't speak, I know, But why did you join this wretched profession ?

- Lakshmi : Because belly is costlier than sex.
- Lamba : My life too has been shaken and shuffled like a pack of cards.
- Lakshmi : You yell for help when you are in danger and call it philosophy.
- Lamba : True. But is not man responsible for the present unrest ? What has freedom done to India ?
- Lakshmi : Only loot, arson, rape, murder and total lawlessness. But what can you do ?
- Lamba : (pensive) you are right, what can I do ?
- Lakshmi : You will brood over it merely to spend restless nights.
- Lamba : Did you ever think over why these doctors are corrupt ?
- Lakshmi : It is a part of the Indian life. Why doctors alone ? corruption is kaleidoscopic.
- Lamba : I think their professors are responsible to give them such instruction.
- Lakshmi : Let us not bother. You are simply wasting your time on irrelevant things.
(Lamba embraces though reluctantly) Forget all illusions, dear.
- Lamba : Did you ever see any fellow working properly ?
- Lakshmi : That is Azadi. But why should he work at all ?
- Lamba : Downfall of morale.
- Lakshmi : Better let us leave double standards, We preach only not to act on them.

- Lamba : (hurt) At least we think on right direction, That individual regime was better than this nasty democracy,
- Lakshmi : Again it is a subjective approach.
- Lamba : Of course, there is no finality to our thinking,
- Lakshmi : (serious and solemn).
- Lamba : Again these donations, capitation fees, presents and gifts have produced only good - for - nothing fellows. A total disorder in the medical set up.
- Lakshmi : How about test tube babies and grafting ? It is not a scientific progress of the medicos ?
- Lamba : Yes, you are right. A partial success although there is a total loss of soul, life has become as cheap as the polythene paper.
- Lakshmi : You create an impression like an image in a false mirror.
- Lamba : Why don't you marry, Lakshmi ?
- Lakshmi : You are not a prime minister's son to be privileged with. You are born an ordinary man and will die in an ordinary way. But who will marry a nurse ?
- Lamba : This love will end in an aircrash.
- Lakshmi : Loves is a necessary, essential, indispensable evil.
- Lamba : Yes, there is two types of love : Indoor love and outdoor love. The former is restricted whereas the latter is liberal.
- Lakshmi : (Cutting an apple) I don't know. You better ask your wife.
- Lamba : But why are you jealous of her ?
- Lakshmi : (Pointing) No, no.

- Lamba : It is difficult to get a chaste woman and unadulterated milk.
- Lakshmi : (offended) I am sorry. Your love is imperfect and a delicate sapling.
- Lamba : Yet it is rationalised, calculated and final.
- Lakshmi : (proudly) Mine is calculative and based on the sixth sense.
(She hands over a piece of apple to his mouth)
- Lamba : (mouning) It is as sweet as your lips.
(Lakshmi out of excitement embraces him).
You are as soft as a dogroæ.
- Lakshmi : You are as nice as a primrose. (They laugh together).
I want only love and no child bearing ?
- Lamba : That is the psychology of a modern woman.
- Lakshmi : No dear. It is but practical, my children should not suffer from social discrimination. Who will care for a nurse's baby ?
- Lamba : True, Again a nurse, again a nurse.....
Ah ! this caste-ridden, class-torn society.
- Lakshmi : Will you accept me as your wife ? No, you can't.
- Lamba : (hesitant) I have every sympathy with you.
- Lakshmi : (brimmed with tears) That's all !
- Lamba : Lakshmi, nature has provided us with certain opportunities, you know ?
- Lakshmi : And we must make use of them ! You are a cynical fool, away from the reality.
- Lamba : (hurt) I am as helpless as you are.

- Lakshmi : You muffle up reality in philosophy and save yourself.
An educated rogue, running away from reality,
- Lamba : No Lakshmi, I am a humanist.
- Lakshmi : Absolutely zero. Selfish and cunning, Don't you love a beautiful girl in the classroom if you get a chance ?
- Lamba : (further hurt) I must teach you a lesson. (angrily he pinches her thigh)
- Lakshmi : (frantically) Ah ! sweet pain, dear.
(she embraces him)
You haven't lost your vigour dear.
(Both are in each other's arms. Dr Bugg enters the ward and he is struck with the door-mat, They get up from their embrace)
- Dr. Bugg : I am sorry to disturb you What is this hospital love?
- Lamba : (regretfully) But who is immune to it ?
- Lakshmi : (silent with down cast looks breaks into regecgritation) I shall have a little water.
- Dr. Bugg : You fellow have excelled us, the doctors.
- Lamba : (smiling) Time was, Time is, and Time will be
- Lakshmi : Time should be.....
- Dr. Bugg : Time and again (laughs) Ahh ! Ahhh ! Forget this temporary melancholia
- Lamba : This terrestrial, mundane, occumenical betterness.
- Dr. Bugg : And this type of dijlettantism too.
- Lakshmi : Let us forget this literary gossip.
- Dr. Bugg : (steanly) I have come to discharge you. Come along check up. Move your eyeballs, up, down, right, left.

(Lamba moves his eye balls along with the direction of the finger)

You are perfectly normal. You can go home. Lead a normal life. (To Lakshmi) Sister, give him this discharge certificate.

Lamba : (earnestly) no Sir, I can't go home so soon.

Dr. Bugg : (Ironically) I know, I know, you are in love with the hospital. We must give place to a new one.

Lamba : (Looking at Lakshmi) no doctor Sir, this bed is empty.

Dr. Bugg : Still we must discharge you.

Lamba : No sir, I am not perfectly cured.

Lakshmi : No sir,

Dr. Bugg : Yet you must go away. You go to Kasturba Hospital for your refractory error.

(Dr. Bugg leaves abruptly leaving the discharge certificate under the care of Lakshmi)

Lakshmi : (sighing) Your wife must be waiting for you.

Lamba : No, dear.

Lakshmi : (giving him the certificate and a bangle weeps)

Lamba : Don't create a pathetic scene. We meet only to depart. The life is like a train journey. I am where I was.

Lakshmi : But it is not that insipid.

Lamba : (sticking a journey bag to his shoulder) I shall leave hence.

Lakshmi : Let us hope to meet again. (she looks straight into his eyes) Fare well !

Lakshmi Lamba : Farewell ! (leaves the stage to depart)
Lakshmi : Farewell ! Farewell !! (waving her hand
Lamba sobs).
Lakshmi
Lamba
Lakshmi

Dr. Bugg
Lamba
Lakshmi

Dr. Bugg
Lamba
Lakshmi
Dr. Bugg

(Curtain)

Lamba
Dr. Bugg
Lakshmi
Dr. Bugg

