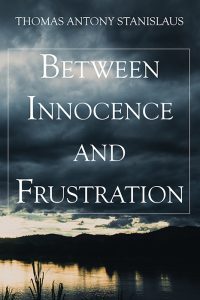
**Between Innocence and Frustration**

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**CONTENTS**

| **Prologue** | **3** |
| --- | --- |
| **Chapter – I Saveri Lord of the Ring** | **4** |
| **Chapter – II Curious Family** | **13** |
| **Chapter – III Sign of Success** | **19** |
| **Chapter – IV Coming Together** | **25** |
| **Chapter – V Disintegration** | **31** |
| **Chapter – VI Frustration** | **35** |
| **Chapter – VII Smith as Tom Boy** | **42** |
| **Chapter – VIII Farewell** | **48** |
| **Prologue** | **57** |

**PROLOGUE**

The Novel is set in a colonial setting. SamiKannu Pillai (Herein refer as Sami) a rich landlord wields numerous influences in the village called Nannilam, in Tanjore District of TamilNadu State. Sami was peasant by origin but having a degree in English literature. Saveri, one of his sons, occupies a central place in the novel. In fact it may not be an exaggeration to say that he is the Lord of the Ring. Later on Saveri’s family grew up in wealth and sophistication. Saveri’s family branches off into a huge size and gets settled in life. Subsequently the family disintegrated due to different occupations and vocations. Saveri had excelled in life and he retired as Commissioner of Income Tax during the British period. Later on Saveri has to face misery. The family was afflicted by depression which seems to be a kind of family disease. Francis, one of the brightest sons of Saveri has to encounter misery both in the early and later part of his life due to bad luck. Smith, one of the sons of Francis, was successful in life. He had a love affair with a girl after his marriage. The girl however left the job abruptly due to a misunderstanding with Smith. Smith was disillusioned and depressed and later became stabilized in life. Death has always been the leveller of mankind gripped Saveri’s family. It is as good as saying he who sits down to the feast of life must end it by drinking the cup of death, the decree common to all mankind.

**Chapter – I**

**SAVERI LORD OF THE RING**

Mr.Pillai called Benwood, the British colonel who called on Pillai’s house. Pillai’s full name was Samikannu,( Here in refer as Sami) a wealthy landlord in Nannilam, a village in Tanjore District. Sami was surprised at the call of colonel Benwood. With great fraternity of having known Ben wood, for a long time, Sami embraced Ben wood. Sami was a strong and stocky young man of thirty years old, with twinkling eyes, tall and with a well built body.

Sami was humble in manners, a very honourable and respected man in the village.

His bounteous wealth was an added rich to his greatness. Sami, though a ‘peasant by origin', was a graduate in ‘English literature’. Sami was Civilized and well informed, knowing the political and social order of his period. Sami had four children, of which one was a male called Saveri and the rest were girls.

Benwood, in fact, called on Sami for a get -together formal etiquette of the colonial period. Sami had already informed Rajathiammal, his wife about the proposed visit of the British colonel, along with his colleagues. To meet the event, Rajathi called ‘Rathna’, her eldest daughter to assist her. Rathna, 'burly’ by physique, hesitated to the call of her mother. Rajathi raised her voice, to which Rathna answered lazily, with a strong displeasure, what ‘Ma’ meant mother.

Rajathi annoyed, for Rathna’s indolent spirit and chided her daughter, how are you going to manage your household in later days. Rathna quipped and said there is still time and you need not worry so early was her reply. The matter settled.

Saveri, who was on an errand, entered the house and saw the group of colonial officers seated in reception, bowing his head in obeisance. The officers in turn of respectful “gesture” doffed their cap. The situation was very pleasant and cordial. The party was over and the officers took leave of Sami, with their greetings and presented a ‘gift’.

Saveri obtained the degree “Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics” passed out in first class at a very young age of nineteen years. Unlike his father Sami who was a peasant, Saveri became a school teacher in ‘Mathematics’ for higher secondary students. Even in those periods it was not uncommon for providing tuition to weak students. Saveri held a tuition class in maths for two hours in the evening. He earned a sumptuous amount in this vocation.

Sami, being a wealthy landlord, had large land holdings. The land was utilized for raising ‘rice’ , a cereal crop. Sami built a large number of rice barns, to “stock” the cereal. Rajathi, always attentive in housekeeping called Sami and discussed the disposal of the “surplus rice” after meeting their requirement. She suggested half the surplus be given to ‘charity’ and the rest be marketed. Sami, was ‘delighted’ at her suggestion and agreed to proceed as said by Rajathi.

Sami had a taste for travelling. He had travelled almost throughout India and a greater part of Europe and East Asia. Sami had friends among French, Spanish and German. During his visit to Europe he made it a habit to visit his foreign friends and stayed for a week in each household. They in turn while visiting India made it a point to visit Sami ‘compulsorily’ because of their closeness. Such get-together has developed so deeply, in that Saveri had the opportunity to learn the French, Spanish and German languages in a more ‘versatile’ fashion from these countrymen which helped later in his life.

Sami, during one of his visits to ‘London’ bought a heavy priced ‘artwork’. Sami liked ‘art and artefacts’. Sami valued ‘beauty’ more than the price of the artwork. Apart from the stuffed wild animals like ‘tiger’, 'deer's horn ‘as wall hangings, and the picture of ‘beautiful art’ by a great artist was also adorning the hall.

Such ‘exhibits’ were the fashion of the colonial period to which Sami was not an exception to such musings an insignia of richness.

Sami’s dwelling “pyramid” structure, a rare feature noticeable in the village, was unique for its shape and style. It was a huge bungalow painted grey with curves and curls and a balcony. Below the balcony, adorn with balustrade at regular intervals. The “ornamental” grill gate was at the entrance. Besides, another ornamental gate in the porch, was to prevent easy entry of ‘strangers’. The entire house covers over eight thousand square feet.

Sami's vision of splendour was also to be witnessed in the ‘elegant’ rooms, built separately for each sibling. The girl's room is arranged with a rosewood cot, having a silk cotton bed. Each room has a full size looking glass of ‘Belgium’ brand attached to the dressing table.

Sami's garden abutting the bungalow was an ‘exclusive sight’ and ‘enchanting beauty’ for its colour and elegance. The garden is adorned with roses, the ‘pick’ of the flower’ for its beauty, jasmine for its ‘fragrance’ including ‘lily’. Visitors to Sami’s house did not miss the beauty of the garden for its elegant rows of flowers, their colour, and fragrance. Also ‘medicinal plants’ filling up the rows have been an eye catcher to visitors.

Rathna, Sami’s eldest daughter ‘ebony’ in colour with wide chest has ‘rousing bosom’ adorning her feminine structure. Next in position was Caroline fair skin but a ‘spout mouth’ with ‘beaked nose’ gifted with a ‘cosy’ bosom. Sarah, very fair, tall and slender, has attractive features. Sarah was good at ‘veenai’ , a musical instrument. She was adept in ‘Carnatic’ music. Her percussion on ‘Veenai’ produces a unique sound that would spellbound a listener ‘.

Saveri, a very tall man for his age stood ‘six foot three inches’. Saveri was well built like his father. His ‘colossal’ figure with broad chest look manly and he has a well ‘defined mouth’ gives an expressive feature when he laughs. Even his eyes ‘smile’ when he laughs. Saveri looks like a heavy weight symbolically. Rathna, has a special liking for ‘Saveri’ especially for his ‘personality’ and he is very ‘studious’ in studies as in other activities.

Saveri is in a sense a ‘dream boy’ always leaning on the balustrade below the balcony observing the ‘curl and curves’ of the building; the texture of its smooth curves provokes an irresistible desire to touch it.

Saveri and his sisters had meaningful intercourse, chat and play within the bungalow. The girls like playing ‘throw ball’. Saveri too was fond of the game. Saveri being well ‘built and aggressive’ would topple anybody. On one occasion, Saveri too joined the girls playing throw ball. While playing, Saveri’s throw was very ‘blunt’ coupled with ‘weight’ hitting the nose of Sarah. Sarah could not bear the ‘weight of the throw’ and she fell down with ‘bleeding nose’. Saveri, afraid, turned quickly to bring water and ‘smear it on the face of Sarah’. Sarah, regained her consciousness, and felt shy to see everybody around her, attentive to see her weakness. Sarah got up, thanked everyone, especially for Saveri to act quickly.

The sister’s have great respect for Saveri's ‘hunting ability’. But Caroline, his sister, somehow developed a misgiving on Saveri’s ability for hunting. Saveri, though disgruntled over her sister’s spirit about his ability in ‘hunting’ took it in a right sense and accepted her challenge to hunt for a bird.

Saveri always uses a ‘catapult’ to shoot small birds and other creatures. On one occasion Saveri was able to spot a ‘humming bird’ on tree top. No sooner did he see the bird with his hand on the ‘rubber string of the catapult pulled with mighty power’ than the ‘bird’ fell on the ground with a thud. Bagira their dog coughs the bird in its mouth.

Saveri picked it from Bagira and handed it to Caroline. Caroline could not believe her eyes, and she was more than impressed by Saveri's ability on shooting with unstoppable reverence. In fact, Saveri has ‘hawkish’ eyes and his immense accuracy in shooting was as good as ‘Arjuna’ of ‘Mahabarat’ a Hindu epic.

Sami, was a ‘perfectionist’ and ‘religious’ liked by all. His “righteous spirit and uprightness” were an added virtue. Sami, mingle easily with people without any reservations. Sami, had a middle aged associate though ‘inferior’ in status but liked him for his ‘straight forward attitude’. Further, Sami was moved by his simplicity and sincerity. He is called ‘Ellru’ by name.

‘Ellru’ had communist upbringing. Though ‘communist’ dislike landlords, Ellru was an exception in that he liked Sami for his ‘liberal views’ and attitude. Ellru was well aware of the ‘philanthropic nature and generosity’ of Sami. Sami left none of the visitors to his house without taking either ‘breakfast or lunch’. Such was his ‘hospitable spirit’. So, the entire village community was ‘at the beck and call of Sami’ and his influence in the village was very much pronounced. A rare status gained by an individual belonging to a ‘minority community’.

One morning Sami, sitting in the corridor abutting the balcony saw the ‘clumsy arrival of Elru’. Elru seems to be perturbed, ‘tense and bewildered’. Elru did not like to ‘foreclose’ his mind set, but ‘stubborn and stiff’ in his appearance. Sami, was a bit disturbed by such behaviour from Elru. Sami’ was ‘furious, confused and agitated’ and was forced to ask Ellru what happened to him to wear such a ‘sombre’ look. Ellru did not reply. Elru was quite unwilling to answer the question posed to him by Sami .

Sami understood some ‘mind boggling’ issues surfaced in the ‘communist party’ meeting. Sami took Elru By hand and brought him near the balcony close to the balustrade. ‘Elru, was ‘bitterly crying, agitated’ and never desired to answer Sami. Sami was annoyed and pulled Eluru, for an answer about the proceedings of the meeting.

For Elru, the conclusion, emerged at the meeting was disappointing. It was pointed at a gentleman such as ‘Sami’. The participants in the meeting were ‘clamouring’ about the ‘supremacy of landlords’ and the bickering focussed on “Sami’s disposition”. In fact, ‘Ellru’ moving back and forth to arrive at a solution to ‘beat the conclusion’ emerged at the meeting. Ellru felt life was ‘shifting its centre becoming more superficial’. Sami was surprised, and failed in his faculty, to articulate to perceive the attitude of Ellru. ‘Ellru was finding it difficult to give an expression. He had to continue the old form. Ellru in ‘spirit he was uncreated’.

Sami owned a ‘Chevrolet’. Mostly at all times Sami himself drives the car. Rajathi’ his wife is a mischievous driver. If her soul had found no utterance, her womb for importance to girls’ act against ‘male chauvinism’. Since her daughters were brought up in a ‘self styled’ way and disciplined manner Rajathi preferred ‘Sami’ for driving the car. On rare occasions like marriage and similar other get-togethers a driver was engaged.

The ‘driver’ was none other than Ellru. Ellru, by vocation, was a driver. He was faithful and dependable for the taste of Rajathi. Ellru was forty years of age and had a profound influence on Rajathi. Even Rajathi was sometimes beckoned to the words of Ellru. Ellru kept the car in perfect condition and never once in his service the car was in ‘breakdown’ condition affecting the family's interest. His driving job though ‘desultory’ but his conduct as driver was ‘impressive’ and ‘scrupulous’ to the fullest satisfaction of Rajathi. Rajathi never had any complaint against Ellru on his errand as driver.

For Rajathi, keeping the children in full ‘bliss’ and their fulfilment in all manners possible was the ‘greatest satisfaction’ she could think of. The children in turn, keep their mother ‘joyful and be attentive’ to take her in every possible way. The other matters were less concern for Rajathi, since she had a great ‘support from Sami’ in all other aspects.

Sami was steadfast in providing care and showed concern on other’s welfare.

Ellru’s dilemma still remains a ‘conundrum for Sami’. In fact, Ellru was ‘rambunctious’ too for many of the questions raised by Sami. But Sami was unrelenting in his pursuit for knowing the ‘truth’ emerged at the meeting. Ellru could not overcome the ‘pestering and inquisitive’ questions of Sami. At last Elru, ready to disclose the fact, emerged at the meeting.

Sami was least perturbed, to know the ‘truth’. Since Sami had enormous influence among the British rulers, they in turn were ready to elevate Sami as ‘Divan’. A ‘Divan’ is more than a zamin equaled to that of a ‘finance minister’ of a state. Sami, therefore ‘pooh, pooh’ the uttering of Elru from the outcome of the meeting.

Sami, over the years grown up in age turned old. He was ‘eighty years’ old. And he desired to leave the household responsibility to Saveri. Sami called Saveri and revealed his intentions. Sami had the greatest faith in Saveri’s “potential” and he knew well the sparks of competence in him to take up the household affairs with aplomb.

Sami, became leisurely and retired from the active work of the household. Sami by nature was ‘innocent’ and never bothered about himself. There was no ground for ‘frustration’ throughout his life. It was the custom for Sami to take an early morning bath. He went to the bathroom and put the latch inside. Unfortunately, time was not in his favour. Sami, slipped in the bathroom and ‘broke his hip’. He was sobbing in pain and he could not raise his voice.

Rajathi, always has been in attention to watch every move of Sami. To her surprise, she observed the long absence of Sami. When she approached the bathroom she could hear the ‘sobbing sound’ from the bathroom. At once she called Saveri to the ‘scene of occurrence’. Saveri tried his best to open the door because it was latched from inside. But the door was broken and Saveri saw the naked Sami, sitting holding his hip.

Saveri called Elru and other attendants and carried Sami quickly to the bedroom. The doctor was called. ‘X-ray’ was taken and the spot fixed. Sami was admitted to an ‘Indian medicine hospital’. ‘Oil massage’ was given to Sami. Then his hip was laden with multiples of cloth around his hip’ to hold tightly.

Sami, was in bed for more than ‘three months’. Rajathi, was depressed and could not recover from the shock of the incident which took away Sami’s ‘enterprise’. Though Sami could recover gradually he could not regain his old ‘fervour and enthusiasm’. Sami’s strength was ‘sapped and he was bedridden’.

Saveri and his sister’s are worried about their father’s physical inability. They all cried, and prayed fervently for speedy recovery of their father. Saveri on the other hand was a grown up young man ‘mentally’ prepared for any ‘eventualities’. Saveri has skillfully substituted Sami’s place effectively’.

Sami was interested to see the marriage of their daughters. Sami, called ‘Saveri’ and expressed his desire about his sister’s marriage. Saveri called his mother and told father’s intention about his sister’s marriage. Rajathi too was eager in the matter. She asked Saveri to assist her in the proposal. Saveri stood in front and was keen in finding a suitable groom for his sisters. At last Saveri was successful in finding a suitable groom for his sisters Rathna and Caroline. Rathna and Caroline were engaged successfully. Ratna’s husband was an Indian civil service officer and Caroline was engaged to an engineer by profession. Income tax officer was engaged to Sarah. Sami was happy with the news of the betrothal of his daughters. The marriage was conducted with all fun and fare suitable to their status. Saveri himself was ready for the marriage. Saveri was married to a well to do girl from a noble family both in status and adoring beauty named Rebecca. Papathi and Chinna were the twin girls born to Rebecca. Saveri then was thirty years of age.

Saveri then had to encounter two calamities. The sudden demise of his father Sami was a bolt from blue, Saveri realized. While Saveri was slowly recovering from this sorrow, he was struck by another misfortune. He lost his wife Rebecca by massive cardiac arrest. Saveri could not overcome the heavy losses which in succession robbed his manliness and mental agility. Saveri felt it was an immense betrayal of faith and trust in God. But Saveri, strong in spirit, overcomes the bloody occurrence of the misfortune grabbing his youthful countenance. Saveri thought it was the best time to settle his two daughters as early as possible because happiness was the greatest agent of purification. Thus the marriage of his two daughters was completed successfully. Saveri was mentally steady and controlled, from the early loss of his wife. However, Saveri felt lonely and a silent feeling of obscurity, causing him a feeling of incurable loneliness of the nights that he has to spend. He was tormented by solitude knowing that his soul went in trembling and frequent illness of his mother was an added worry for Saveri. Rajathi became gloomy since the death of Sami and recurrence of sickness due to arthritis added to her woe. She lost faith and confidence. But, she was fortunate to see her grandchildren. Rajathi was tremulous and became nervous.

It was winter and Saveri in his routine manner made ready for going on a shooting spree to the nearby forest. Bagira the dog accompanied Saveri . Before leaving the house it was normal practice for Saveri to visit his mother to ascertain her health condition. When Saveri entered his mother’s room a foul smell emanated from the room. Saveri’s intuition suggested that his mother would have passed away long back might be the reason for the bad smell. He observed from the distance the bulged stomach and discoloured face of his mother, corrupting her original beauty. Saveri realized what he thought was right. Rajathi died long back. Soon Saveri informed nearby kith and kin and arranged for an early funeral. Rajathi was buried close to Sami. Thus the chapter of a generation comes to a close with Rajathi’s death.

**Chapter-II**

**THE CURIOUS FAMILY**

Saveri entered into the institution of marriage for the second time and he married Kollandai as his better half. As a matter of fact women would in general hesitate to marry a widower. Perhaps Saveri’s prosperous and pompous status as Assistant Commissioner of income tax department under the British would have prompted and self motivated Kollandai to marry Saveri. Kollandai is short in stature but an immensely gifted woman matching the traits of Saveri. Saveri and Kollandai are a couple made for each other. Saveri was hardly thirty two when he married Kollandai. Saveri then shifted his household to Coimbatore which is uniquely called as poor man’s Ooty (a hill station in TamilNadu) since its climate is very salubrious with cool breeze, lighter sun unlike other parts of composite Madras was far flung- connecting presently called Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala- apart from the headquarters at Madras. The name Madras derived its name from a Portuguese family named “Madre” who lived in Madras.

Saveri bought a large bungalow measuring more than ten thousand square foot from a Telugu speaking gentleman called Sulru. The bungalow has sixteen rooms combining ground and first floor. Spacious porch exudes its beauty with an ornamental facade. A large sofa of rose wood decorated with arête-facts is a unique splendour to the front portion. One could feel the immensity of the home at entry and the sight of the sofa is grandeur exploding the richness of the spot it occupies. Beside other chairs exorbitantly expensive in their quality of materials and skill of design. In fact, it represents colonial superiority and standard luxury of the period. Beyond the porch the yonder has a large garden that provides a welcoming sign to visitors. The avenue trees extending from porch to the entrance look like an arch garlanding the bungalow. Sprawling lawn providing a greenish splendour of velvet green was an added attraction at the entry point. The tree composition was dominated by Neem, followed by helianthus providing a rich colour of red through its flowers. Saver's choice of Neem in particular was due to the fact that it oozes more oxygen than other trees which render the cool breeze for the location. It was a visual treat and provided a grand procession to the porch. Abutting the porch was the elegant row of flowers. Juniper a low evergreen bush with its dangling berries. Jon-quill, a flowering plant has long leaves frequented with flowers. The choice for fragrance was dominated by rose, jasmine, lavender, and Lilly. It is an enchanting beauty because of its elegant rows and cynosure with different colours.

The backyard of the house is filled with fruit bearing trees. Mango leads the row followed by jackfruit, guava, Fig, Helios-trope a tropical with bean shaped fruits, Lia-ur-ice a medicinal plant complete the backyard filling. Further, teak, red sanders and sandalwood had their preferential share in the backyard. Muruz, the gardener a Muslim by creed was a favourite of Saveri. Since Saveri during his diurnal process would come across Muruz active in watering avenue trees besides spraying water to the flowering plants. Saveri with keen interest watched the hard work carried out by Muruz. Saveri never misses to see the backyard with fruit bearing trees. In fact, seasonal fruits like mango, jack, fig and guava emanate their presence with their sweet smell. It was a grand feast for the seasonal visitor to have the taste of Alphonso variety of mango with its sweet delicacy and guava and other fruits.

The passion and fondness for gardening was a pride for Saveri. He was meticulous in attending to minute details on the entire ground surface occupied with green plants. He was very particular about fresh shoots and bulbs in fruit bearing trees. His particular taste under gardening was exemplified by his constant inquiry with Muruz. Muruz was even more pious in attending to plant care. He never felt shy in asking Saveri for money for buying manures and mowing machines to cut overgrown grass. Saveri listened with passion and met whatever demanded by Muruz on plant maintenance. Saveri had the inner most liking for nature’s stunning beauty and their subtle influence in shaping the cool climate of his house and surroundings. Saveri has an overall sense and vision in the importance of plants and trees impacting the climate of the region.

Kollandai apart from her caring for visiting colonial officers gives curious attention to kitchen affairs. Isaac, the male kitchen chef along with his wife Lourdes was experts in cooking any dish. Kollandai's job was only to mention the menu and the rest of the activities from marketing and cleaning the goods was a matter of particular concern for Isaac. It was largely a well knit family of thirty members inclusive of children and attendants. Kollandai instructed Isaac to have a vegetarian diet on Tuesday and Friday. Tuesday meant for St.Antony and Friday in commemoration of the passion and death of Jesus Christ. The rest of the days were filled with a non- vegetarian diet.

Saveri was forty three years old and he had nine children. Apart from four male siblings the rest were girls. Saveri had great reverence for girls and equal attention was provided for boys .Francis was the favourite son of Saveri. Selva the eldest of all followed by Rathna and Caroline were twins. Further, the other male twins are Adaikalam and Arnold. Among the girls Suganthi was preceded by Sarah and Esther, the last girl. All the children have decent looks with attractive features coupled with energetic and youthful countenance. Sarah and Esther were exceptions since they were not only fair but tall and slender looking like dolls with cosy bosoms. Adaikalam was an exception. He is like Saveri, very tall standing six foot four inches. He is a good sportsman. Francis was ebony in colour and a very bright intellectual. Selva was not good in studies. He was a man of arrogant prodigality and a despicable person in a noble family. There’s something worse than stupidity in him.

The children had a ceremonial life before marriage endowed with a taste for games. The children’s play room was a larger one with table tennis, and a Billiards table for elders to play. Saveri engaged their children in sophistication in all manners possible. Since Saveri himself was a multi linguist adept in French, German and English, he had a well equipped library with a rich collection of literature. The library abounds in French classics and in English too. The collections included entire volumes of Shakespeare, Addison’s essays, Johnson’s lives of poets, Confession of English opium eater by Augustine, Benjamin Franklin autobiography to mention a few popular cases of the period. Francis was an exception and he took interest in reading religious books. He has a large collection of devotion to Mary the mother of Jesus Christ. Francis and Esther were regular visitors to the library. Francis was an exception. He would spend the whole day with books. He was a kind of book worm and a strange kind of intellectual.

Since Saveri was very bright in education, he intended to give a good education to all his children. With the exception of Selva who was laggard in studies the rest of the children were very bright. Saveri was blessed to have intellectually sound and bright children. He cherished every moment with their intellectual attainments. Francis stood first in Mathematics for the composite Madras presidency during his graduation. Adaikalam was Master of Arts in mathematics. Arnold was an engineer by profession. Suganthi, a bright girl, took up medicine for her graduation. Esther was a post graduate in English literature. Since Francis was a very bright young man Saveri desired to send Francis to London for training in respect of Indian civil service examination. Francis was interested in Astronomy and he pursued study on Astronomy during his stay in London which was like computer study of the present day. However luck could not favour Francis. Francis was afflicted with a severe cold and he was afraid whether it would turn into pneumonia. Saveri called Francis back to India. Saveri decided for early marriage for Selva and Francis at a very tender age of twenty three. Selva and Francis were given in marriage on the same day. Selva‘s wife's name was Ratnam and Francis' wife was called Francesca. Selva had two children. The first was a boy named Kumar and the second child a girl called Julie. Francis was childless even after four years of marriage. It was a big worry for Saveri.

Selva was employed as Head clerk in Coimbatore Municipality. Just as in education he was a problem in the job he was employed. Saveri comes across reports of unnatural posture of Selva in his workplace. He was bibulous too. Health wise, Selva has certain complications which perhaps renders him unnatural in his behaviour. A sudden drop in health took place in the case of Selva. Despite strenuous effort to redeem he could not last long. He succumbed to ill health and died at a very young age of thirty two leaving his young wife Ratnam as widow. .

Francis was unemployed at the time of marriage. But ‘lady luck’ dawned on him after the entry of his wife. Francis got employment as ‘Rationing officer’ for the composite state of Madras. Francis was flamboyant as a rationing officer. Francis was very popular having been exposed to a very tightening schedule since composite Madras jurisdiction extended up to Andhra in the North, Karnataka and Kerala in the west. The command over food supplies to the entire composite Madras state was a special status conferred on the rationing officer. Francis has a lucrative position both monetarily and materially. The unfortunate aspect was Francis had no children to enjoy the surplus position of the family in all respects. Unlike Saveri, Francis was living in a small house measuring six hundred square foot, previously occupied by Christian nuns. But the house was more than enough for husband and wife. Francis led a very luxurious life commanding the position as rationing officer.

Unlike Sami, his father, Saveri bought large land holdings in both Madras and Coimbatore. To say precisely, Santhome(located in present Chennai) commencing from All India Radio extending up to a place called Adyar( also in Chennai) was in his possession. Besides these holdings in the Administrative headquarters (Then called Madras) Saveri bought more than hundred bungalows in Coimbatore, in addition to land holdings prominently known as Red fields. . The children used Redfield for learning horse riding. The solicitude of the morning and cool climate had a gladdening effect while riding. It reminds of what Wordsworth; the English poet, said about early morning influence that ‘it was blissful to be awake in the morning than young to be in heaven.’ The children practiced horse riding before they went to school. Even in school, Saveri’s children were singularly prominent since an attendant came by bullock cart bringing Tiffin during school intervals. In fact, the entire school children would turn attentive by the arrival of the bullock cart that the time had set in for interval. Snacks, breads smeared with butter and fruit juices were served to Saveri’s children by the attendant. Saveri often visited Redfield for his morning walk and spent the time with children. Always Saveri had the closeness of Francis. Francis too was very attentive to his father in every manner possible to serve his father.

The servants who kept the Red field’s clean and cut overgrown grass bow their heads when Saveri passes through them. Saveri did not like such slavishness on the part of servants since he believed in human dignity. Saveri on the other hand encouraged his servants to feel free and smart while engaging themselves in their work. Saveri was liberal by nature and reverence to elders through nature but he did not expect an overwhelming servitude on the part of servants. In fact, Saveri was a heavy weight by the standard of his position as a wealthy man apart from his official status as Assistant Income tax commissioner. He commanded all-round respect in Coimbatore town and more particularly among his community. He was like a patriarch for the Christian community and his philanthropic stance won him many friends. He likes children. In one of the meetings arranged in Redfield’s a congregation of people especially the Christians praised Saveri for his liberal views and his benevolent attitude engaging the poor. People adore him for his graceful nature. In another context women with infants met and thanked him for releasing them from their drudgery of hard work and pressure from their drunkard husbands. On another occasion a Christian priest along with small kids met him since the priest was aware of the fact that Saveri liked young ones. Saveri had a special affinity towards children. Saveri was pleased at the gratitude but felt abashed at receiving it. This gratitude reminds him how much more he has to do for the simple and kind community. Despite these good qualities Saveri never posed himself great and pride and obstinacy never touched his greatness. He was very simple, a rare quality to be observed in a man of Saveri’s stature.

**Chapter-III**

**SIGN OF SUCCESS**

The British colonial officers considered them very superior compared to Indians. Racism to the core that they are whites was the reason for such discriminatory attitudes. The Indians were never given higher positions in administration and it was a distant dream for Indians to get into higher positions in the administrative hierarchy. With such a background Superintend was the highest job to be attained by Indians in administration. That too was cornered by caste Hindus who ignore other castes. The caste Hindus secluded and considered far superior to other castes that they treat others as inferior to them. To overcome the caste pyramid itself was a Himalayan task, and then to occupy a central position in administration. It was a place for competence and power. Under this background, Saveri has to compete with diligent and scrupulous attention. No one could match Saveri’s ability and defiance in his capacity as Assistant commissioner of Income tax. Saveri proved to be efficient and elegant in his approach in dealing with all matters concerning administration in which colonial officers themselves formed a part. His attitude was cordial, generous and never showed contempt to any of his colonial subordinates while rendering his role as top administrator whose jurisdiction extending from Madras to Andhra a huge and vast area in administrative parlance. The affable nature of Saveri earned the high place among the colonial dignitaries even up to that of Governor General. It was a period of colonial disintegration giving place to the freedom movement in India, but Saveri secured the unique distinction among Indian officials. Saveri had friends even with Indian freedom fighters despite the fact the latter were vehemently opposed the colonial rule. What was more surprising was the fact, the dominant caste Hindus who were sycophant to colonial members could approve the mannerism of Saveri and the fact was that he had friends with his critics.

One has to be careful in dealing with caste Hindus. If caste Hindus were sweet and impressive in their talk and sharing in their work means they stay so, for a brief period. They wait for an opportunity to ditch you on other occasions before the superiors. The freedom movement was at its zenith providing scope for Indians to make their presence felt in day to day affairs. Administration was impacted due to the large role played by freedom fighters. Within office the behaviour of caste Hindus was to show head to colonial officers and tail to freedom fighters. Caste Hindus were ambiguous in their approach and there was trust deficit in their attitude and approach. The Indians inclining themselves largely toward freedom fighters show less concern and disengage themselves in day to day administration. Saveri was a man of thorough bred to snatch opportunities however beguile the subordinates and especially caste Hindus whose supremacy in lesser administrative hierarchy was a challenge for Saveri to overcome in disposing complex matters. In those periods the higher colonial officers have to write personal files on the conduct and efficiency in administration for Indians. The fact of which was wholly disliked by caste Hindus. The caste Hindus were always in search of opportunities to dislodge Saveri on one pretext or the other. But Saveri was a man meant for success. He not only maintained friendship with caste Hindus and even among his detractors who had no other alternative but to oblige colonial interest in the elevation of Saveri.

Saveri was promoted as Commissioner of Income tax, a rare opportunity assigned to an Indian during the period of colonial supremacy. How come this elevation? Because Saveri had defined composure ,capacity and potential to deal with any matter in a comprehensive fashion without causing any ill will, contempt either to the winner or/loser. That was Saveri’s acumen in administration. As Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics he was very sharp in perception of problem areas with utmost precision .Further, his multilingual potential has come in good stead to face colonial superiors with aplomb. His handling of matters showed that he was not attention deficit. His total involvement with a sense of devotion and sincerity to duty won him the highest office.

Saveri's thoughts were Christian by practice and pantheist in belief. He was a convincing raconteur. He was innocent coupled with a sense of uprightness. His account was brief and sweet. Saveri was a man of culture and cultivated spirit in him spread equally between Indians and colonial officers. He never gives easily to the Indians in a strand to customs of colonial practice. Since in him an Indian he had all the spirit of benevolence to care for the interests of Indians which perhaps that spirit in him won many friends both among his equal and subordinates. Despite Saveri’s possession multiplied in several counts in terms of wealth surpassing a Zamindar he was level headed. The upper most Indian officers in those days like Saveri paid one thousand rupees a month which is equivalent to several lakhs on present day count. Apart from salary there was a travelling allowance. Apparently Saveri’s wife Kollandai led the family chorus out of travelling allowance. His salary remains as savings. It was the reason perhaps Saveri’s household had large wealth both in terms of bungalows and land holdings .He was an aristocrat. It was the real aristocracy if people understood what it means, which they don’t.

Kolandai, Saveri’s wife, led the household with utmost diligence and care. Even with a large number of visitors and relatives coming from dawn to dusk the prevailing practice in the household was to manage the situation like a marriage party on each day. That means all attendant activities from reception to feasting and lunch were planned with great precision and magnanimity by Kollandai through her attendants. Apart from these daily routines Kollandai has provided great support to Saveri both as wife and good adviser. It may not be an exaggeration to say that Kollandai even partook in advising Saveri on administration aspects which Saveri welcomed and followed both in spirit and in action.

Saveri, a man of magic with skill abound as an administrator. Two things were impossible to him: to stand still or to move aimlessly. He had great interest in the upbringing of children. Whatever was demanded by his children from dominos to cars, everything was kept under the beck and call of Saveri and to the fullest satisfaction of his children.

Saveri did not like begging. He hates the sight of a beggar. Begging was rampant and widespread during those periods, much to earning the wrath of colonials. Colonials because of this sight consider themselves far superior to those of Indians. The colonials treat Indians in a more inferior way with disgust and slovenly. Saveri considered begging as a kind of disease and crime. Begging he consider surrendering human dignity borne out of indolent spirit and such people he sees as cowards. Therefore the sight of begging was a matter of disgrace and he felt unbecoming on the part of Indians.

Whenever Saveri desires to seek leisure he visits the Gymkhana club of Madras of which he was a member. The club was cosmopolitan in outlook and meant for high dignitaries and well placed individuals both in wealth and in administrative hierarchy. Whenever Saveri makes an entry into the club all members rise in reverence for his stature and he himself looks pompous by his colossal figure. His liking was for Bridge under playing cards.

As commissioner of Income tax he was scrupulous and never displayed dualism- saying one thing and acting differently. As a true Christian, he was impartial and justifiable in tax matters. He followed what Christ said on one’s duty – “render things that are Caesar’s -which means oblige oneself what is due to administration. He was able to identify fresh avenues for tax purposes to the utmost satisfaction of colonial superiors. It seemed incongruous to his close friends. His close friends lament his strict posture. Chettiar's successful trading community among whom he had friends were malicious and intended to dislodge him. Therefore this community beware of dealing personal matters with him. In fact, this community rebelled against his tax policy. They even went to the extent of winding up the showmanship of Saveri. He was fortunately escaped in a car accident which was pre-planned by his close friends in order to cut across his mobility. God was on Saveri’s side and he was saved from the malicious plan of his close friends. The idea was to finish him off from the tax scene permanently. After that unfortunate incident Saveri became more careful and limited his friendship circle. What was more disturbing to Saveri was even the colonial officers had a role in this malicious plan to close his chapter.

Saveri was in his late fifties. But age did not curb his industrious nature. In his entire endeavour he was more concerned with his liability to the exchequer and earning the best name among people. Truth to service and rendering his duties in absolute faith and truthfulness was ingrained in his approach. While looking back on his personal affair Kollandai brought to the attention of Saveri about the Diamond Jubilee year since their marriage. In commemoration of this union with Kollandai that had completed fifty years, Kollandai was very keen in celebrating as a grand function. Saveri was blissful for this suggestion of Kollandai but uniquely non-observant of the event which surprised Kollandai. Saveri gave his nod because of his wife’s insistence. He has great regard and respect for Kollandai. He believed her that if she utters a word it carries meaning and all embracing in nature. Such was his confidence that he bestowed on his wife. Even in daily chorus, while rising from his bed he would blair calling Kollandai to take care of his morning obligations. They were made for each other couple since she knows everything that Saveri need during morning hours before he left to office.

While making arrangements for the marriage commemoration event Kollandai desired for calling high dignitaries apart from relatives who were sincere and faithful in their welfare. Apart from his grown up children all married themselves provide a retinue of gathering to make up for the invitees. The celebration was planned for three days. Kollandai herself a devout Christian like her husband intended for a solemn high mass on the day of intent followed by charity lunch for more than thousand genuine poor people inclusive of invalids. Isaac, the chef had the entire responsibility in preparing the menu and he got the approval of Kollandai. Kollandai was much impressed in the manner in which items were proposed, providing a connoisseur of delicacies everyone to enjoy and bless the couple for many more days to come. Francis had eight children and other members of the family constituted more than fifty members. His close relatives out number his own household and they account for more than hundred members. The entire event was planned meticulously and discharged with pristine perfection with gifts to be given to participants.

Saveri was on the verge of retirement. He retired in 1943 as Commissioner of Income tax. He was given the title as Rao Bahadhur and king’s coronation medal of king George. As an industrious man he was interested in research of German language post retirement period. He was invited by the Maharaja of Travancore now named Kerala state, to organise the Income tax department. The king promised him to elevate as Divan of Travancore. A Divan is equal to the finance minister of a state in common parlance under the king’s regime of administration. The king was impressed by the vast knowledge and administrative acumen of Saveri in redesigning, reforming and structuring the department. Saveri was elevated as Divan by the Maharaja of Travancore. In power, structure and style it was a rare attainment for Saveri. He remained an illustrious son to his illustrious father.

**CHAPTER-IV**

**COMING TOGETHER**

Gathering of people is a delight and gathering of relatives, kith and kin, and cousins is even more delightful. The elders share news among themselves and make a broad inquiry about their involvement and closeness with others. For children they get good company and peer group and make the teens joyful and happy. Saveri’s family was large with three daughter in-laws and his own daughters numbering five had an equal number of son-in-laws. In all, Saveri and Kollandai enjoyed the benefit of thirty grandchildren. The group consists of grandchildren with a predominance of sixteen boys and the rest are girls. The entire family group arriving and coming together during important functions or in summer vacation was a routine affair. During summer vacation it was a regular get together of the entire family circle and visited tourist spots. Saveri was lucky and blessed in so far as to say that the visits of the family group during summer vacation create a unique gathering and Saveri never felt lonely during post retirement.

The entire family group undertook visits to Kerala and Nilgiris district, a hill station to see the scenic beauties abound in these locations. To transport the entire family two buses full of load was a common sight during every trip. It was not an exaggeration to say that Kerala the land of God whose splendour spread in beauty where nature dwells with such might in terms of colour and arrangement of hill tops erasing the sky along the dawdling mist is beyond description about which one has to be present to enjoy and experience that awe inspiring enormity of nature. The family cook attended to breakfast and lunch and dinner served in time. It involves a large entourage of men and materials with a bus full. Since Saveri was Divan of Travancore, the Maharaja of Travancore allotted a special bungalow for their stay.

To start with, the group went to Athropalli, a scenic spot where the conglomeration of mountains was a stunning beauty annexed with tea gardens that accommodates a greenish vision. The stay in every location was for a day. The next attraction was kollukumdainear near Munnar.The state highway18 runs along the mountain course either side filled with Tea plantation. The drizzling and the formation of the rainbow was sensational to watch which touches the ground with multiple colours. Standing amidst the rainbow was an experience by itself and the glistening sunlight with crimson red glittering beyond the mountain range was a sight one had to experience and enjoy. The other locations visited by the group were Pothemedu, Biman valley in Idukki district and Munnar tea plantations and an equal measure of aromatic vegetation, misty valleys and low flying clouds are to be enjoyed in person since their beauties are beyond description of words. In this location the gradient and alignment of hills particularly designed for tea farming is a haven for nature’s blissful experience.

Kumarakom, one of the most tranquil places to be visited in Kerala situated near Vembanad lake with exotic flora and fauna, tempting waterways, coconut groves and mangrove forests. The experiences undergone by the group at Kumarakom’s houseboat stay was exceptional and wonderful with a lot more solitude and privacy. Idukki is famous for Cheeyappara waterfalls and the group enjoyed amidst verdant hills and luxurious forests. Such was the might of nature’s wonder spread across Western Ghats in Kerala.

Next in importance was silent valley and Malampuzha garden and Dam in Palakkad gives a kind of solitude and immense silence of the place soothes both mind and soul. Saveri, a very thoughtful person, always liked to be left alone in the midst of such wonders. The stillness of the location made life suspended for a while. But Saveri was relaxed in happiness and in complete exhaustion. Perhaps his rumination was, such places were residing in a slot of heavenly spirit. Also, he felt sorry and craving that he could not enjoy such blissful moments during his younger days which may perhaps have boosted his industrious quality and triggered intellectual faculty’s in even more momentous fashion rendering his originality with greater thrust.

The multiplicity and complexity of nature’s abundance settled in one place such as Western Ghats of Kerala was the God given gift. There is no doubt to say that it is the Kashmir of southern India Just like Dahl lake in Kashmir and the backwaters amidst sprawling coconut garden is another form of nature’s dignity swelled in this part of the country. The beauty of nature’s wonder settled in Kerala has no matching place and there was no approximation in that but filled with exact precision and glory.

The penetration of trees in the forest provides a spectacular vision for their growth with a competitive move reaching for their heights which makes one’s neck high and dry to observe. Such was their tallness and their vegetative growth so thick makes the sunlight difficult to pierce through. The girth of trees is so big even encircling both human hands is not enough and it requires more than three to four persons from top to bottom. It gives the impression it was the law of nature that no one can comprehend nature’s magnificence which is mammoth and difficult to perceive.

Then the troupe shifted to Kanyakumari district. The scenic spot was Keeriparai in Marthandam. Teak wood forest vies with each other for their growth in terms of its height. The entry point is filled with rubber plantation .The group stayed in a forest bungalow in the midst of the forest. A makeshift tent was also positioned to house the entire group. Fortunately there were no wild animals. Next in vision was to see the sunset in Kanyakumari. It was fortunate for the group there was no cloud and the sun set was seen in all its mighty fashion. The sun resembling a huge disc in bleaching red sinking into the ocean with such rapidity resembles the swallowing of a spin wheel by the deep waters of the ocean. It indicates the rapidity with which earth rotates in its orbit fulfilling its purpose in the cosmos. In the first place it was hard to understand where the profundity and genius of nature for its movement rests need less mental effort but to see the occurrence of sun set a grand sight, the glory of which belongs to nature.

For Saveri the absence of responsibility post retirement gave him a complete sense of satisfaction since he was surrounded by near kith and kin gives confidence and a sense of freedom. The sense of happiness comes in full measure and thought filled with fulfilment accompanied by his wife and grandchildren. He could not see a separate aim for he had now faith- not faith in any kind of rule or words or ideas but in an ever living ever manifest God. Saveri has great faith in God who is infinitely more unfathomable than in the architect of the Universe recognised by freemasons. He equipped himself with a mental telescope and looked into remote space where petty worldliness hid itself in misty distance. All this is a forewarning to the end of man with the kind of death that faces every human. At the same time he had the sense there is a God without which not one hair fall from man’s head

His pleasant intimacy with his wife and grandchildren invoked a special joy to which he himself was unable to fathom the spirit behind this feeling. Such was his happiness with his fellow beings which he never understood and enjoyed in his eventful days of administration as Commissioner of income tax. Formerly, all pecuniary questions especially the request for money to which as an extremely wealthy man produced in him a state of helpless agitation and complexity; Even though he was aware that he was a philanthropist and this domain was within the realm of his wife Kollandai. Nevertheless, he acquired an extraordinary strength and vitality when his belief in God was overwhelming and he met the needs of others with great generosity. His help to church and missionaries was vast and abundant in limitless fashion.

The annual ritual of visiting places of interest and tourist spots was restricted to twenty-five days. Half of summer holidays were spent for the children. The rest of the days had to be spent in Coimbatore with fun and fare. The children dividing themselves into boys and girls had their games of their own choice. While playing hide and seek boys and girls mingle. The girls, for their soft nature, could not win against the boys with aggression and confidence. By and large girls mostly play rings, throw balls and badminton. The boys play table tennis and some grooming themselves in Billiards

The attention of elders drew in fixing marriage for Emily, Rathna’s daughter. Rathna has a soft corner for Saveri being the eldest among daughters. Rathna, ebony in colour, was looking lively. From head to foot was in proportion. She had a large bosom adding to her feminine structure. Emily, daughter of Rathna a reverent beauty for her stylish look and in structure gorgeous and above all she was fair skinned. She had education up to collegiate level. Emily looked like a cine doll. Eligible bachelors vie for each other to marry her since she was gorgeous and blond. Saveri spoke with animation while discussing the marriage proposal of Emily. An engineer in the Public works department was fixed and betrothal was over. Marriage was fixed in the month of June of the same year .The entire group packed for their respective household and reached their destination except Rathna since her house was in the backyard of Saveri‘s bungalow.

But there was passion mingling with pain in Emily’s face. Emily was a perfect woman for her age but she had an unaccounted leaning in one of his brother’s friends who was handsome and manly in outlook. She could not arrest the feeling and impression she had gathered so long on her loved one, a gentleman called Ruben. Though Ruben fell in love with Emily his family was against his wish and opposed. Despite his aggressive posture to get himself engaged with Emily, Saveri’s family was very well advanced in arranging the betrothal of Emily. In those periods girls amended themselves with the views of the ruling patriarch when male chauvinism was the supreme power. It was a well known fact Saveri would not deviate for any reason once the betrothal was over. Though Rathna was aware of her daughter’s involvement with Ruben she could not overcome the mighty Saveri whose authority was more pronounced because of his status and wealth. Though Rathna remained indecisive had no alternative but to go along with the ruling of Saveri and she had no courage to oppose Saveri. The sufferers were Emily and Ruben. The engineer to whom Emily was betrothed was not handsome but a man with supreme stature with sound education compared to Ruben who was only a post–graduate in English and unemployed. In that period a great reverence was attached to engineers not because of status but resourcefulness and in earnings too they have attractive salary. Emily has no second thought considering the firm opinion of elders, gave up her desire for Ruben and sacrificed her love for the sake of elders.

Emily decided to relive even though she was emotionally disturbed a great disappointment for a young girl to overcome simply for honouring the views of elders. She was not inclined negatively but took a positive approach that all is for good. Such was her determination that was immensely powerful and she withdrew her anxiety about Ruben. She valued the opinion of elders and decided that it would be a well thought out plan. Her attitude and decision was immensely positive and she disclosed the matter to her mother that she was mentally prepared to accept the proposal for marriage. Rathna was happy and felt safe from her worry. Well, what is to be done? Fate could neither be postponed nor avoided. Finally, Emily resigned to her fate though in a sense it was cruel. Rathna went to her bed, happy and in a certain sense agitated but free from hesitation and indecision.

**CHAPTER-V**

**DISINTEGRATION**

Union and disintegration are like two opposing poles. One stands for happiness while the other for separation. There is a saying that a happy family stays together. But with the change of time, factors such as avocation and placement for the purpose of a job separate the union of a large family. Even during the days of Saveri the latter had to stay in Madras while his family was in Coimbatore. The members of Saveri’s family all grew up and most of them got married except Esther. Proposals were under progress for fixing a groom for Esther. Esther, a tall woman unique, would be an added beauty especially if she is groomed in Saris. A fair skinned girl of twenty three years of age. Her tall, slender figure had an air of distinction. Her structure was appropriately proportioned, too authentic to be modern. Her body seemed designed as an exercise in consistency of style. A style made of gauntness of tight flesh of long legs and swift movements. Her features had the fine precision of sculpture. Her hair was black straight and swept back. She is a gifted woman with a sizable forehead who vouches for her intellectual quality since she was post-graduate in English literature and employed as Assistant professor in a government college.

In late fifties the profession of lawyer carried great respect and had recognition in society. Eligible lawyer bachelors get a bride in quick succession. For Esther a lawyer was proposed named Louis and the marriage was over.

Adaikalasamy the eighth son of Saveri was lucky enough to have his uncle as Collector of Madras. The collector was none other than the son-in-law of Saveri from his first wife Rebecca. His name was Prakasam pillai. The latter had recommended Adaikalasamy for the post of Assistant Director of Fisheries Department, Govt of TamilNadu. Saveri's son Arnold was a civil engineer in the Coimbatore Municipality. Arnold was studious and active and was in the good book of Chairman of the municipality. As always has been in any profession there would be hypocrites who do not work but feel jealous of others who are efficient.

Arnold was promoted as Chief engineer of Coimbatore municipality at a very young age. Such an elevation became an entanglement for his future. A colleague of Arnold used witchcraft against Arnold who turned depressed showing no interest in the profession. Arnold’s attention in work gradually began to show a declining interest and he was afraid to go to office fearing Muthu who was next in command in the municipality for elevation. Kollandai was more depressed than Arnold and she advised him not to go to office, since a better job would come for his professional qualification and experience. The habit of remaining at home resulted in fear psychosis and Arnold liked to be left alone. And he was never interested in going to any other job.

Saveri lost one of his eyes and the other with blurred vision. He had lost his authoritative influence in the family. He too pecked Arnold and remained indifferent in his attitude against Arnold. Arnold became a misfit and turned out to be drudgery for Kollandai. Kollandai later realized she made a blunder in pampering Arnold and preventing him from going to work. Arnold became an invalid and began to blame and curse everyone who attempted to restore his normal life. Francis, his eldest brother stationed in Madras, is a well known Psychiatrist. Francis arranged for admitting Arnold into the hospital for his speedy recovery. Arnold misunderstood Francis and he began to hate Francis for his effort to put him into the hospital. Arnold cursed Francis and chided him to behave like an officer and don’t be treacherous and insulted him for the better part played by Francis. Francis was annoyed and he gave up showing further interest in the matter. This was the first casualty in Saveri’s family and from this point he witnessed a downtrend in his family’s fortune. It is as good as saying he has to do with what foul never comes clean.

Saveri was much perturbed and perplexed and he lost control and interest in life. Unexpected frenzy began to oppress him. The whole meaning of life which was centred on Kollandai too was now thwarted. Saveri now felt alone. It is as good as saying if there is one ill come many. The second victim in the family was Suganthi, the sixth daughter of Saveri. Though she was bright and took up medicine as her career, in the midst of third year of her study she was gripped with depression. She behaved violently and she stopped going to medical college during the third year of her study. For Saveri such developments are like once old age arrives uncalled for and he becomes very submissive to the call of Kolandai. Saveri realized the pride in Goeth before fall. The position in Saveri’s family was such that there were many slips between the lip and the cup. Another untoward happening was the loss of Emily’s husband in an accident because of drunk driving. In Saveri’s family the circumstances and situation coiled in such a way to indicate that spring is not always green. In fact, the happenings in Saveri’s household were like trouble; news never comes in single files but in battalions.

It was thought that the marriage for Suganthi would help to overcome the depression. Suganthi was married to a Revenue Board clerk stationed at Madras. But Suganthi remained sober and her husband was very tolerant and behaved very warmly towards Suganthi. Her husband was aware of the fact that Suganthi belongs to a wealthy family; hence he respected her with all his might and reverence. After giving birth to a girl child, Suganthi seems to have recovered partially. Her husband was happier than anyone else in the world. But it was a short-lived occurrence. Loured, Suganthi's daughter was taken care of by Esther. Esther took special care of Loured since she was a broken child without her mother’s care. Suganthi could not recover from her depression. Though she took up medicine she was able to take up minor work but not to the extent of running a family with responsibility. Her husband could not tolerate any longer and he divorced his wife Suganthi. Thus Suganthi became the second member to be disowned affecting Saveri’s prestige and honour. All these developments sparked a violent outrage in Saveri. The latter became furious about such a fate to him when he was just a foot from the grave. Saveri was struck with remorse and became a victim of circumstances and arrogant fate for which he was least responsible. He became weak mentally and gave up his hobby of undertaking research on German language despite his blurred vision. There was not a shadow of doubt in his mind as to whether his indifference to happenings in the family is right or wrong. But he was grief stricken. The happiness before him appears so inconvertible that if only he could attain it, it would be the end of all things after his death when he becomes a free man from the drudgery of mankind. Sometimes it seemed to occur to him that others too are not happy and they merely tried to take the dog days preventing pleasure and happiness that was the abode of Saveri’s house in these years. He was greatly distressed and pretended to be busy with other interests. He knows full well and aware that all that occupied others was a mere frivolous trifle unworthy of attention.

**CHAPTER-VI**

**FRUSTRATION**

The news of Francis losing his job as Rationing officer, since the department was wound up after the end of war was over by the new Chief Minister of Madras. Francis lost not his job alone but seven years of rich experience as an independent officer with vast powers and attention. For Saveri it was heart-rending news and he was not ready to believe how it could happen? It was suggested then that Francis should enter civil service since during that juncture emergency recruitment was ongoing for wartime veterans. Francis, having a brilliant academic career, tried his luck to enter into civil service. Francis was thirty one years of age when he was out of employment. He began to curse the third child since its birth was a misfortune affecting his career prospects. In that period, the belief the third should be a girl was considered good omen whereas the birth of male child brought ill luck to him. Francis’s wife Francesca has deep belief in astrology and she too felt it was better to handover the child to her mother. The boy was given to Francesca’s mother when the child was hardly a week old, a heartless mother in a certain sense.

To enter civil service as an emergency recruit the basic qualification was the applicant should be a war veteran. Francis served in the Territorial Army for a brief period and then worked in an ordinance factory at Jabalpur in north India. Francis was screened for the interview and he met the interview board for the first time. The Board members were cheerful seeing the brilliant academic achievements of Francis. But luck could not favour Francis. The chairman of the board named Grub was once a subordinate of Saveri .Grub earned the wrath of Saveri, the latter disliked Grub for his inefficiency .While perusing the personal record of Francis Grub the chairman of the board could easily recognised that Francis was the son of Saveri his starch enemy. The first question posed to Francis was whether he was the son of Saveri. The positive smile of Francis had become a dominant disqualification for Francis. Grub easily dismissed Francis and he could not proceed further to go into further details about Francis. The members in the board took the cue from the chairman of the board that Grub disqualified Francis. Francis lost his opportunity in the civil service. Instead a postal clerk but a war veteran was selected. The latter became Chief Secretary of Madras later. Francis had a second chance to face the IAS (Indian Administrative Service) board. But” lady luck” was against Francis and the same Grub as devil from the deep sea, once again discounted Francis’s opportunity to become a civil service officer. Since then Francis had been trying for various posts. Francis, then selected to become an analyst in Reserve bank of India and that too was snatched by a caste Hindu.

During that juncture one Mr. Rathnasamy a retired professor and later an MP of upper house of Indian parliament and serving as Member of Madras public service commission.(then called MPSC).Rathnasamy sought a financial obligation from Francis since the former a close friend of Francis knows that Francis has wealthy background. Francis’s request for the sum was denied by Saveri. Francis again lost the opportunity to become a highly placed officer in Madras public service Since Rathnasamy held a grudge against Francis the latter could not help him during his financial need. Francis’s various endeavours to be successful in life had been denied by fate. Finally the chance to become General Manager of Southern Railway was in the grip of Francis because beyond which he became overage to take up any of the government positions as a war veteran. He was selected and recommended for appointment in the position under Railways but for his luck which always acted against him, this opportunity too was snatched away by a caste Hindu recommended by the then Chief Minister of Madras

The failures in succession left Francis into a mix of rugged man and frustrated and he began to behave in a more rude fashion. Even an ordinary daily routine looked complicated for him. He became cruel to the extent of ill treating his wife who was a chum to him before, now become a laggard and she was used as a sex machine without bothering about her health which led to successive child birth increasing the size of the family. That frustration led Francis, creating a rift affecting his relation with his father Saveri since the latter failed to meet the financial need of Francis. Francis’s inability to help especially for Rathnasamy had cost him the opportunity to become a highly placed officer in Madras civil service. Francis began to oppose his father vehemently. Saveri suffering from dementia could not believe Francis, for his behaviour who was his chum during younger days. The thought of being alone without any fruitful occupation turned Francis to become a type of recluse and as a man afflicted by depression. Always, there was quarrel and lack of unity in the family of Francis. The latter’s eldest son Ignatius who was ten years old then could not tolerate the torture meted out to his mother. Francis turned violent, beating his children for no reason. The trend of demagoguery developed in Francis in turn has affected the mindset of Ignatius who began to torture younger siblings. Since Ignatius being the first child he has had all the aggressiveness and virility began to beat everyone like his father.

Ignatius could soon begin to realize the growing size of the family at such a young age and his mother’s difficulty in maintaining the huge family without any bread winner since his father was without any employment. Ignatius felt his future becoming very bleak even at a younger age which spoiled his upbringing. The blossoming of spring never happened in the life of Ignatius. Youth which was supposed to be full of pleasure turned negative for Ignatius. The curiosity for learning defied in spirit and action in the case of Ignatius. Ignatius never obeyed parents. Ignatius became a replica of Francis’s frustration. His mother sobbing with desperation about Ignatius' behaviour began to pray fervently to change the personality of Ignatius. Mother’s prayer was answered.

Ignatius becomes sober both in spirit and behaviour and shows interest in studies. He acquired the courage, perseverance to conquer all odds by his father Francis. Ignatius proved to be a man capable of overcoming different crosses in his life. He learnt that we live with custom even though the rule of the house undoes him. As the saying goes an ass endures his burden but not more than his burden. He realized faith is the force of life. Ignatius grew up in an age bent to forgive his father’s deeds. To his surprise a power of life and hope of happiness rose to the surface and demanded satisfaction.

All this happened in a short notice. Francis got a job in the commercial taxes department as a primary officer in the administrative hierarchy. It was a separate story by itself. Francis went to the Secretariat where he met Mr Mani, an Indian civil service officer in the rank of Commissioner of commercial taxes Department. No sooner did Francis meet Mani the latter realized that it was Francis who was his colleague at London pursuing to sit for the ICS (Indian civil Service) examination. Francis’s ill-fated story troubled Mr Mani. Mani immediately responded positively and placed orders using sue motto as Assistant commercial tax officer. Mr Mani knows the academic excellence and capability of Francis. Francis was immensely pleased and thanked Mr Mani profusely for his gratitude and generosity in accommodating Francis into the government service since Francis was thirty six year old when he got the order as public servant. From that moment a glorious phase unfolded in Francis’s life and career. He seemed to have forgotten all that happened to him. He totally ignored the erstwhile condition and situation that coiled on him so badly. He became bold and the fear no longer gripped him and decided to make an event full beginning for a better future.

The reawakened power in life that had seized Francis was evidently visible and an irresistible and unexpected change in thought and behaviour began to surface which became especially clear in his approach toward household activities. At home he gave himself so fully and frankly to this new feeling which aroused in him a new spirit and he did not try to hide the fact that he was no longer sad but bright and cheerful. The storm-tossed sea of Francis’s family had subsided within its shore and seemed to have become calm.

But mysterious forces that move humanity continued to operate in a mysterious way (because the forces of motion are unknown to us).The movement of humanity went unceasingly as the flow of time despite the fact the sea of history seemed motionless. The various forms, family groups disintegrated and dissolution of their relation and displacement of family members who were very close until then were in a course of various preparations to the dictates of fate.

The entire family regrouped in a different fashion each in their own style since every member has been engaged separately after marriage except for Arnold and Suganthi the two victims of depression, a family disease. All the well known people to Saveri as relatives and friends could no longer visit Saveri’s house since the family disintegrated professionally each accounted for a separate job and placements. The liberal movement, the get-together and party within Saveri’s family had become a thing of the past when Saveri was in power.

Kollandai too became a victim of old age and she too lost her past liveliness. Under these circumstances which unfolded a grief stricken storm, Saveri’s pension became meagre to maintain the past glory. The number of attendants had been reduced to five from ten except for Isaac the chef and his wife and children. Kollandai however wishes to maintain the old standard. She began to sell the bungalows one by one to answer the pompous status of the family. Hundred bungalows now become reduced to twelve to keep the family status in tack especially to keep Saveri’s dignity and status.

Saveri did not care for the lands that he bought in Madras which accounted for more than five hundred acres. He failed to acquire those lands fearing the Land acquisition Act which was in force. It became no man’s property. Had those properties were reclaimed his family would have abundant wealth for a generation to maintain. It was a foolish thing on the part of Saveri for failing to reclaim those lands. Saveri’s behaviour too underwent a change and he behaved sullenly causing dissatisfaction to Kollandai. As is said, old habits die hard. Saveri turns wild if he sees a beggar at the door. Despite his blurred vision he would shout at the sight of beggars running with his stick with that mighty ferocity to drive away the beggars.

The circumstances of his birth, education and resourceful life of the past began to ring in his thoughts. He was once standing on the highest possible pinnacle of human power now turned blind and seemed to be hollow. He began to worry about his pitiable condition primarily due to loss of his sight. The intrigues he faced in office, flattery and self deception inseparable power began to clink in his memory*.* The habits, passion and impulses toward goodness, beauty and truth occur in his mind with a faint memory of his glorious past. He could not recall the same conception of welfare of his family that he enjoyed thirty years ago. He felt philosophical in recalling the old, watching the movement of time with each year turning to new experiences unlike the past that once seemed good and now turned bad and vice versa.

Saveri began to realize that what is called science can harmonize all contradictions and possess unchanging standards of good and bad over a period of time. He began to think all this due to intellectual learning right from the adolescent stage. Thus he does not agree with his limited understanding of the process of universal functioning of God’s creation.

If his ultimate aim is the progress of family members it is easy to see there are plentiful ways of diffusing the honour of the family since every member of the family have been well settled except for the two dormant cases affected by depression. Saveri’s top worry was why such a thing happens in his and not in some other generation. To that extent Saveri turned into a coward because of age. Because it happened! Chance created the situation. Genius utilizes history. The words chance and genius do not denote any really existing thing and therefore cannot be defined. Those words only denote certain stages in life for understanding of such occurrences in his family.

Francis, Adaikalasamy, Caroline and Sarah were settled in Madras. Sarah’s husband was a District supply officer and owned a second hand car. His children were all grown up and remain to be settled through marriage. A severe famine took place in the Madras state in 1967.The state could not provide daily necessities like rice, vegetables in adequate quantity led to severe shortages. The state suffered a famine-like situation. Francis, once a Rationing officer, now tossed up and buckled not to provide even a single day sufficient meal to the family. Francis’s children stand in queue to get bread at nearby bakeries.

It was during that juncture Sarah was in ceremonial position having plenty of rice in sacks stocked for a year and vegetables supplied on a daily basis which spread in heaps in the house. The house of Sarah is in the next street of Francis. She never bothered to learn what had happened to her brother Francis. Francis was greatly disappointed about the attitude of Sarah. Amidst plenty in one household there was poverty in her brother’s house. Such a mean mentality and a simpleton in approach of Sarah vexed Francis.

Francis’s children all are graduates but they were not as bright as Francis in academic performance. That too was a frustration for Francis. On the other hand Sarah who was a dunce in studies had bright children. One was qualified as a doctor, and the other as engineer, and one can figure out any professionals in Sarah’s family. Francis tried his best to place the children in a better position but ill luck gripped the children like Francis in his younger days. However all entered into various government services.

Adaikalasamy was the luckiest man in Saveri’s family who retired as Departmental Head in the Fisheries Department of Tamilnadu Government. He had one boy and two girls. The boy was successful academically but a total failure in the later part of his life after marriage .The girls were married to bank officers. Caroline had one boy and two girls. The boy, a postgraduate , was a misfit in life. And he remained unemployed throughout his life, dependent on his wife’s mercy. He was a drunkard too. He was a man without convictions and values in life. He had a miserable death. The two girls were engaged to middle level officers in a private company.

Francis was in the grip of good luck and he had rapid promotions in quick succession. Francis retired as Deputy Commissioner of Commercial Taxes. Had the break in service of Rationing service been counted, Francis would have retired as an IAS (Indian Administrative Service) officer because of his exemplary career record. So far so good and Francis had an attractive pension on retirement. Francis had a calm and settled life. In fact it was a blessing in disguise since Francis, thrown out of ill luck in his younger days, was able to reach the highest point of his career that human intellect could think of the more obvious it becomes that the ultimate purpose of existence is beyond our comprehension.

As weird happenings beset mental agility, the sudden demise of Saveri was an unexpected event for the entire household. Saveri died at eighty years of age. Kollandai was left alone in such a big bungalow. After father’s death the family group breaks up, as always happens. Kollandai met her fateful day at a ripe old age of ninety when she breathed her last. Francis seemed unable to understand the meaning of all these events and bowed his old head in a spiritual sense to which he had always been accustomed to and expecting and inviting further blows which would finish him.

**CHAPTER-VII**

**Smith as Tom boy**

Smith, one of the sons of Francis, was behaving like a Tom boy in the office not in a bullish sense but he had a love affair with a girl in the office where he worked. It involves a special story. Smith received particular attention and intelligence too because he was hard working by nature. Smith was a tax specialist by vocation. He had established a separate name for himself in the office. Smith has good analytical ability. The perception and style of functioning of Smith was known to all as an intelligent officer and very bright. At this juncture a female recruit joined the office. Her name was Aarti. Her exquisite profile belonged to a cameo of the same period, it’s pure proud lines and the lustrous dark hair worn with classical simplicity suggested an austere imperial beauty. She felt a broad indifference to certain officers who tried to catch her attention speaking inferior about their wives. She thought they were incredulous, cheat, lecherous and unscrupulous in their behaviour. It was like advancing into empty rooms. But she has ambitious audacity. It has a tone of ecstasy too. Smith infrequently visited her. But he kept distance and he was aware that she already felt his intelligence. Once he gave a smile to her of a man who is able to see to create the “glory of existence”.

It was the mocking challenging smile of a brilliant intelligence. She too was careful and she took it casually as if she had not read his intelligent smile.

She had a secret romance developed with Smith. If joy is the aim and the love of existence, she thought and if that which has the power to give one joy is always guarded on one’s deepest secret then they had “seen each other naked in that moment”.

He moved and stayed in a distance and said in a strange tone of dispassionate wonder. We are a couple of blackguards aren't we?

“We do not have any spiritual goals or qualities”. It was a sense of guilt on Smith’s part because he was aware that he was a married man.

“Aarti was teasingly sensuous toward him and that her posture beguiled Smith. Smith became a victim to her passionate love and he wilfully ignored his beautiful wife”.

Smith, though a man of character, felt sorry for his passionate sense towards Aarti and felt he won a great battle since most members of the office had an eye on Aarti. Her background was not of an “aristocratic family'' compared to Smith. But she possesses the spirit of aristocracy”.

He called Aarti as Pandora( Mentioned in Greek mythology) a nickname he coined since her head was broad but beautiful. But it does not disturb her beauty. She called Smith as Ares the god of war in Greek mythology. They had both resented their nicknames.

“Smith asked her why she liked me. She said you are a man of “excitement and danger”. Danger! “What sort of danger”? She said you will know in course of time.

He looked at her intent and unsmiling. She asked Smith, “What do you like about me”? Smith laughed. She “wondered aghast”, what had made her say it. She smiled.

But she did not know “why he looked her so strangely, but she felt that he had seen some connection which she could not grasp, between her body and something within her the strength to rule”

Smith was in official camp. He informed her of his absence. “How long does she ask?” It is for “Three days said Smith”. She said oh, gosh, “how I could be alone for three days”.

She felt an “eager impatience”, “touched by the excitement of fear, as if he had leaped into an unknown danger”. She dismissed the fear and felt separation would increase closeness between them.

She thought absence of Smith was mere opportunities for another “brilliant performance” of Smith.

She was aware when one of her friends asked why you helped him. She said because he is a man of “achievement”. There were “no battles” he could lose, no enemies to beat him. She told her friend, I help him because he is vulnerable.

But he has such a great capacity that I adore him, she said. But there were a few times, during his absence when she felt an undefined apprehension. “Why should she seek him?”

Once she sighted that Smith was in the wash basin for lunch. She suddenly grasped the nature of that particular mood when they were together. She too rushed to wash the basin close to him expecting he would grab her hand.

It was a sudden sense of “freedom and safety” - because she realized that “no other opportune time would occur to feel his touch of hand so close and immensely with a sensuous feeling. She thought” they are not to be stopped at the moment. “Forgive me” the fear if I thought I could lose the chance like this so close to Smith.

Smith too stood looking at her for a moment and it seemed to her it was not a look of greeting after an absence but the look of someone who had thought of her every day of his presence in the short period of their association.

She felt that there was a new reticence between them which “strangely was a new kind of intimacy”. She did not question him for his timid posture.

Some days later she asked him only whether he liked her closeness. It was days later, when they were alone walking during lunch hour she asked Smith “what’s the most depraved type of human being”. He said, the man without a purpose.

She was feeling an outright feeling of love, she wondered and she enjoyed their friendship. She felt why she was so aware of her enjoyment of her movements of her body in the process of walking.

She did not look at Smith. She felt that his presence seemed more “intensely real” when she kept her eyes away from him; almost as if the “stressed awareness” of her came from him like the “sunlight from water”. “You think you are good, don’t you? '' he asked. I always did. She answered more defiantly without turning. Well let me see you prove it. Why do you think that I care to prove anything to you she asked. “Want me to answer?”

She heard him chuckling and after a while he said Aarti there’s nothing of any importance in life-except “how well you do your work”. “You are yet to know, and be aware of that. Whatever “else you are will of course from that”. It is the only measure of human value. I know it now. “But... Smith, why are you and I the only ones who seem to know it?”

“Why should you care about others?” Because I like to understand things and there is something about people that I can’t understand: “What?”

Then she said “what do you expect from me to be close to you?” “Do you suppose I should be naked to catch your love?” Smith stopped, looked at her and “slapped” her face.

What she felt was contained in a single instant while the ground “rocked under her feet in a single blast of emotion within her”. He said I know your cheap qualities. She felt offended. She should have “killed any other person who struck her” and for such behaviour from Smith. She felt the violent fury which should have given her the strength for it - and as violent a pleasure that Smith had done it.

“She felt the pleasure from the dull hot pain in her cheek. She held her head straight and stood facing him in the consciousness of a new power feeling her with a mocking smile of triumph. “Did I hurt you as much as that?” she asked. He looked astonished, the question and the smile were not those of a child. He answered, yes-if it pleases you. It does. Don’t do that ever again. Don’t crack jokes of that kind.

He turned abruptly. She laughed; stepping back. Oh, no let me be as I am. Smith looked at her for a long moment. He said slowly and very earnestly Aarti , you are wonderful. I thought that you always thought so.

She answered her voice insolently casual. After some time she felt disturbed. When he approached she “smiled insolently” as if unconscious of any “contest intended or won”. She “stripped her relation” with Smith to the bright simplicity of a “geometrical drawing”.

Aarti shows no sign of interest in men. No romantic inclination whatsoever. She seemed both older and more radiantly innocent than usual. She held her head in shame of a male friend who “sacrificed her nobility”.

Smith met her and asked her again whether she was “offended”. “She responded insolently”. He asked her again whether she would like to be friends as usual. She said “as you like”.

She knows she was not a child, not a girl but a woman of such confident dangerous power, her nobility and status. She thought she was devoid of sexual capacity. She felt it was a kind of chaotic inefficiency on her part.

She felt injured and now feels immense relief and a “touch of amusement at the thought of Smith coming to her again with selfish design”. Her thought of Smith as an intellectual proved wrong. She felt he is “stupid. “She slumped forward across the desk lazily feeling neither exhaustive nor desire to work. She had a “monstrous delight” to make him feel sorry for what he did. She had decided to “leave the job and pose him a more dreadful future in her absence”. She knows that Smith has “absolute desire and love” for her.

She knows very well that he had “surrendered to her”. She did not know why she had to win. She did not know why she had taken such a decision to “resign the job”. “Why she felt it seemed so crucial and urgently necessary”.

It seemed easy to play; it was as if she would vanish for Smith and someone’s power playing for her.

She felt an arrogant pleasure leaving him alone soon. She would beat him. She felt the rising pain of exhaustion- not knowing that it was a painful feeling, it was only sudden stabs that made her aware of some part of her body for an instant to be forgotten in the next. She felt an “exultant pleasure” - because her absence would create in him a “stab of pain” that she felt once; he should feel exhausted as she was what he did to her.

She was doing it also to him- if it was not her pain that she felt or her body but his. She had gone to the extent of collapsing him in her absence. “She is well aware it would drive him to end his life”.

She left the job without informing him. Smith felt her absence a killing experience. But he could not help because she left the scene in a more “perilous fashion” creating a vacuum that no one could fill it.

It took a long time to restore his former condition and status. Smith felt “guilt for his unscrupulous and treacherous conduct”. But at the same time a man’s “first love'' was a great experience. Smith accepted it as a weird condition for his better future”.

**CHAPTER VIII**

**FAREWELL**

Francis, now the eldest member of his family circle, had great respect among his siblings. But the bad quality of Francis was he never mingled easily with others. He is feeble in this sense of the term, freakish too and a kind of recluse by all accounts. He even does not show the kind of love and affection he had against his wife in the past. As the old age grips the relationship between husband and wife becomes more “formal”. Francis was not an exception to this type of attitude. Francis and his wife were alone with two sons yet to be settled. The other daughters and sons were married with grandchildren for Francis to feel happy. The sons to be settled are Franklin a graduate in Physics while the other called Patrick a drop out from school. Franklin was hard working and he sat for the civil service examination twice and faced the interview board. Franklin aspired to be a “Foreign Service officer”. His ambition could not be achieved. He was offered other services in a lower cadre because of his low rank. He rejected the offer. As luck would have it he was selected for an executive post in a public sector company. He accepted the offer and joined the insurance service. Patrick the drop out was a thorn in the flesh for Francis’s family.

Patrick was in the company of drunkards and he had become a fretful character to cope up with by the family. Francis and his wife could not bear the roguish behaviour of Patrick. Patrick often pesters his mother for money and he even went to the extent of “beating his father and mother” for money. Francis often ran away from the house to his daughter Bridget leaving Francesca alone. Francesca became nervous because she was once hit below the stomach by Patrick. Both Francis and his wife ran away to Salem and stayed there in their own house a property left by Saveri to his son Francis

Francesca’s health started deteriorating. She was hospitalized for fever. Doctor’s could not diagnose rightly at the first instance which led to her further deterioration of health. At a later stage the doctor informed that she was afflicted by jaundice which led to the damage of her liver. Despite strenuous effort Francesca could not be saved. It was the sudden death of Francesca. Francis was not mentally prepared for this sudden eventful death of his wife.

Francis was left alone. He had been left feeling an “angry emptiness”- because he had not expected this event which became so sudden though he had known of what nature. In the early part of his life Francis depended deeply and heavily on each and every aspect for his care of Francesca. He was left, not with a sense of mere “disappointment” but with a “sense of his own degradation”. He grew to hate his existence though he knew he had to face it. He had to fight. The thought of his wife’s death was impervious to the will of his mind. He had spent his life based on what his intellect and pious nature would lead to shaping matter to his wishes by the power of his brain- and now he found it intolerable that he should be unable to control the matter which was beyond his control. Earlier he had “won many battles borne out of misfortune but in this battle he lost”.

Francis was terribly upset and he was like a broken reed and could not rely upon his children. Francis was henpecked as an individual .He does not know even simple matters how to latch the door. It was said an intellectual is one who does not know how to open his garage. Francis simply matched this statement. Sudden disappearance of Francesca was a bitter experience to Francis which he detested.

Francis realized lately how he in his long tenure as father failed in his duty to show “more love” to his children while they grow up. It was a “Himalayan blunder” which Francis did throughout his life. Now he feels lonely and afraid on whom to depend for the rest of his life. Even though Francis was getting pension and owning a large property in Salem and Madras he could not dare to ask any of his children for his care and sustenance and he lacks the moral courage despite his sound position monetarily. Francis although a devout person religiously but his faculty of mind which once was arrogant and aggressive came in front dodged his courage and he felt morally shy and succumbed to cruel fate.

His “faith on Franklin was not fulfilled as he anticipated” and Francis felt desperate since the former said goodbye to Francis and left to foreign Country after the death of his mother providing no scope for second thought to Francis that he would take care of him. Franklin though helped his father but his efforts in rehabilitating his father was not to the extent and in proportion to the benefits he availed from Francis at the latter’s fag end of his life.Francis said this more remorsefully to Leela the wife of Smith. Francis has immense faith in God and he was all along prayerful throughout his life in so long his memory could vouch. His immense faith and prayer saved him from desolation in the form of his daughters and sons who stood happily to take care of their father even though he was not grateful in his younger days to his children

The children felt it was their duty and this was the only positive attitude that Francis developed in his children that they too remained faithful to God like their father since their early childhood. It was decided that Francis would visit within thirty days in each children’s house. It was a formal understanding among children to take care of their father. In practice Francis stayed more than a month where he felt comfortable.

It happens in all families that there is a square peg on a round hole. One of the daughters-in-law of Francis was not from a sound family background. This woman was an associate in the office where Caligula, one of Francis' sons, was employed. The friendship between Caligula and that woman named Kaleeswari culminated into love. She was a coveting and cozen type by upbringing because of poverty. She is only fair skinned, not charm beguiled Caligula and he surrendered to her sweet talk. She clearly estimated that Caligula has a good family background. Moreover Caligula boasted himself that he was from a noble family owning properties in Salem. His lavish spending made her believe he has a wealthy background. The fact was even though he was employed in a government as upper division clerk, his pompous style misled her and she in turn was convinced that she had a good future.

To start with her life, initially she was very courteous and obedient to Caligula’s father and mother. But as the days went by she let out her real character, what she was and what was her expectations. She is fiendish and an uncalled for woman in her style and taste to fit into Francis family circle. Any way Caligula belated realization about her wife seems he was cheated on all accounts by her. She was the ruler of the house and having known the full history of the family she demanded her father-in-law that let him write the property in such a way that house in Salem be owned by Caligula after his death ignoring other legal heirs who have rightful share on the said property.

Further, she dictated terms that in such an event she and her husband would take care of him until his death. Francis was very clear that his own son Caligula too had a role in playing the mischief of this sort. Francis was a “pious” man; God fearing and above all innocent to a certain extent and he realized the injustice behind her demand since other children had equal rights in the grandfather's property. Francis declined the demand of Kaleeswari and the pressure she mounted on her father-in-law.

Kaleeswari became furious and decided to throw away her father-in- law out of her house with the consent of her husband who was a henpecked individual and always hid behind skirts. Kaleeswari sent away Francis in a humiliating fashion by throwing away all his possessions, especially the property documents and other belongings in the road along with his baggage. Caligula was a silent spectator to this ungrateful behaviour of his wife. Caligula was a rogue; he kept silent and met his father’s needs till Francis had savings in the bank .The moment he learnt that Francis' savings in the bank were saturated he drove away Francis from his house with the connivance of his wife, a fairweather woman and a cut throat.

Smith, the son of Francis who was cursed by Francis and his wife for the loss of job as a Rationing officer, came to his rescue. He attended to his father’s needs with genuine concern. Francis felt remorse and disturbed of the interest shown by Smith and his wife towards him. Francis felt at home in the house of Smith. As agreed upon earlier, Francis by rotation went to his daughter Bridget's house. Francis' son- in- laws are good at heart. They took care of Francis with more concern and delight. Francis gave his entire pension to look after him.

Bridget, the eldest daughter of Francis, kept her father with great care and affection. This was possible because her husband, though a drunkard, had great respect for Francis, his father-in-law. Bridget has two children .The male called Prakash and the girl Emelda. Bridget put in her great effort to educate her children. Initially Prakash did not show interest in studies and he was a laggard. Instead of going to school, he would go to the park and spend the whole day with his friends. This tendency of Prakash was brought to the notice of Bridget who took special care to put him through tutors and created the habit of attending school. Prakash later became an electronics engineer and went to US for further studies and got himself employed in a lucrative job.

Prakash was great in respecting her mother and thankful to her in building a prosperous career for him. Prakash invited both his parents to the US and took them to important tourist spots and scenic beauties in the US. Bridget visited the US twice. But in her second visit Bridget was afflicted with pneumonia. She returned to Chennai along with Prakash and his children. Bridget was admitted into a private hospital. Prakash showed special care in giving the best medical attention to his mother. But Bridget could not cope with several medicines. The flume formed in her lungs was very wild and heavy. She could not breathe freely. She was suffocating for breath and she was put in a ventilator. Prakash, watching these developments cried uncontrollably and tried his best to save his mother. But Bridget could not survive the suffocation which turned critical and she breathed her last. Prakash was uncontrollable for the pitiable sight of his mother. Prakash arranged for his mother’s funeral in a grand manner. He left his father and sister and left the US. Thus the second member of the family of Francis bid farewell.

Francis had been to each son’s and daughter’s family on a routine basis without any fear. But Francis realized that this too was miserable and he wanted to be settled in a separate apartment. Francis was settled in a two bedroom apartment along with a maid servant for cooking purposes close to the house of Ignatius. Francis was going on well. And he attended church service on a daily basis in the evening nearby Ignatius house

Francis visited Coimbatore where Smith was settled. Francis liked the warm welcome afforded to him by Smith’s family especially Francis liked Smith’s wife because she was a well educated woman cultured and natural person. She showed her love to an elderly man like Francis. Smith owned a car and he took Francis daily to a nearby church. When Francis was in Smith’s house he spent the time talking with Leila, Smith’s wife. Smith would narrate how he visited London at the age of sixteen and his marriage proposal etc to Smith’s wife. Leila gave good company to Francis and he liked her very much. Francis was proud that Smith came up very well in life. Francis stayed for a week in Smith‘s house. Then his sense of belonging to Chennai increased. Francis was humbled by the love shown by the family.

As fate would have it Francis decided to go to Chennai. Francis reached Chennai and settled in his apartment. Suddenly the house maid left the house taking her belongings. This upset Francis. He fell ill. He was admitted to the hospital fearing viral fever since body temperature has not subsided despite three full days of fever. The doctor’s suggested brain scan and abdominal scan and yet they could not diagnose properly. Despite these sophistications in medical science, Francis was left pathetically without proper care. It was learnt later that he was afflicted with “jaundice” which damaged his liver in the same manner as his wife Francesca had died. Francis was put on a ventilator since he was suffering for breath. Francis could not prolong and he passed away peacefully at a ripe old age of ninety. The third member in the family bid farewell.

Patrick the dropout was in his relentless habit of smoking ten packets of cigarettes every day along with consuming heavy doses of liquor. He often visited Ignatius' house. Patrick as a plumber earned not less than one thousand rupees a day. But he spent the entire amount on his friends and liquor. Patrick was a man of strong will and courage and he spent his twilight days in the company of a friend's house and stayed in their houses.

As a weird experience Patrick was diagnosed with Tuberculosis. Patrick was admitted into the hospital. His friends told Ignatius that Patrick needed money for medication and food. Ignatius and Smith helped Patrick. But Patrick could not stay in the hospital and failed to take drugs. One evening he came to the house of Ignatius in an auto coughing non-stop. Perhaps, Patrick intuition suggested and was able to realize that his end was nearing. As he portend rightly the whole night he was coughing non-stop. He was vomiting too. Ignatius was witness to all these happenings. Around three a.m. Patrick gave a sign to Ignatius to go to bed. By five o’clock when the church bell rang close by, Ignatius woke up and went to see Patrick. But Patrick was lying dead in the room. He was sixty two years old when he died. The end came to Patrick in a more pathetic fashion.

The point of death having once arrived carries no sympathy however good/bad the case may be it will seize the opportunity to take up the breath. It was said he who sits down to the feast of life must end it by drinking the cup of death. His funeral was arranged in a simple way and he was buried close to his father Francis. Thus the fourth member in the family breathed his last. The other members in the family of Francis are alive taking up their own mantle what future has afforded them. A mediocre but contended for having been in government service took their past and present life. Hence there are no significant and eventful career benefits worthy of mentioning that had taken place in other members of the family of Francis.

Keenness and smartness however important in life could not help, in sustaining, when one becomes a victim to old age. One learns many things in life. The things that seemed remote and hostile became sources of bounty and fervour. The sense of cooperation, perseverance and knowing one another gracefully the senses of belonging, are the virtues that life teaches to man seeking knowledge. Human resources would have meant people. Developing human resources with the right perspective should be the habit of a refined man. It empowers him to become an intellectual. The very resourcefulness of human value developed over several years of experience and exposure at different levels becomes extinct, the very moment when ego predominates one’s sense and surrendering goodness that is most needed for decent human life.

Man is born with tassels even during birth. The birth pang taught him to be careful. Unfortunately, man becomes cruel and bids farewell to good sense and thought. Politics, culture, and religious teachings are different things. But to make peace with oneself is a civilized sense which comes through self learning and experience. The uncertainty of life teaches man many things and it teaches one how to get oneself involved and develop successfully thus bidding farewell to old ideas.

Redefining one with a modifying behavioural approach and bidding goodbye to old is the sign of blossoming modern. Such an approach teaches man to live rationally and enables him to learn how to be mingled with fervour of modernism. Combining technology with human resources is the means for development. Herein lays the secret, bidding farewell to old ideas and embracing fresh one. Human beings are always enigmatic and always interesting.

God loves every man. But man is loathsome and bid farewell to noble thought and intentions, which beguile mankind and ruin the self and mankind. Understanding the art of reverence is a precious stone to be kept with sound principles and care for one’s future to proceed harmlessly. Good bye.

**End**

**Prologue**

Life is a blend of success/failures, a common feature observed in human life. This novel is a combination of both. The novel has colonial background (pre-independent days), in that SamiKannu Pillai a peasant by origin but literate enough to know the political and social order of the day. Saveri, his lonely son, occupies a central place to say he is Lord of the ring. The family upright in spirit and innocent had to endure sufferings, rendering the family dejected and encountering frustration as the ultimate wisdom of life.

Romance has a place in the novel in which Smith, a son of Francis, is trapped in romance even though he was married. Smith experiences alternating swift of events, changing mood, displayed immaturity which ruined his romantic affair. Francis, one of the sons of Saveri experiences lady luck in a fleeting moment. Francis encountered a bad swing of events which wrought frustration in his life.

It was said that he who sits down to the feast of life must end it by drinking the cup of death. Saveri’s family was not an exception to this decree of life, the leveller of mankind that sweeps the family in quick succession.