

Portrayal of love and Marriage in Mamang Dai's novel, Stupid Cupid

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Abstract : Mamang Dai , a poet, a journalist, a social activist is a very prominent personality in the field of literature belongs to the Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh located geographically in the northeast of India . She has been adorned with various prestigious awards which also includes the Padmashree for her excellence in the field of literature. She has carved herself a space amongst the other women writer's of northeast and also in national and international platforms. She like her other women contemporaries who talk a lot on the issues on love and marriage through their leading characters. She also raises eyebrows by talking about such themes related to love and marriage which have been a recurrent issue since time immemorial and it has a universal appeal connecting any reader as she talked about issues so relatable though a person might belong to a different time and space. She tries to create characters who live in the story with their own emotions and issues. She creates characters who fall in love , stay committed and get married , deceive their partners, few marry in haste later walk out of the marriage , lust, love and few for status in the society. The present research paper is an attempt to have a dive into the depth of clarity to gain knowledge and psychological experience of how Mamang Dai has displayed the universal themes of love and marriage echoing the emotions and feelings of a regular couple anywhere in the globe in her novel. She very artistically tries to blend in the ethnicity of the northeast India with the universal themes in her novel creating a world of her own creating ripples.

Keywords: Woman, Love , Relationship, Deceit , Marriage

Marriage is the base of a family which is a fundamental social institution which is meant to last forever. Marriage is an act between individuals preferably a male and a female as nature permits which is accepted in the society observing legal and cultural terms. Encyclopedia Britannica cites that " Marriage is a physical legal and moral union between man and woman I complete community life for the establishment of a family."

Marriage leads to the fulfillment of human beings needs leading to procreation and children are born and it results to the continuity of human race in their family caste and country. Marriage not only is an act of performing for regenerating human race but it also carries forward the culture and tradition practised by the married couple and their family members for generations carrying forward the lineage of where one comes from. Marriage differs according to a community, society and culture but all have a similar function and purpose. Though marriage holds a common purpose it differs in each community.

Therefore marriage can be considered a bond between a male and a female to fulfill certain objectives in their life whether it be their biological necessity to procreate and have children or to fulfill their physical, emotional, psychological needs or for social recognition in the society giving them a social status. A marriage is considered valid only after they get approval from society performing few rituals and ceremonies for making their marriage a valid one.

Methodology : The topic of the research paper is a literary attempt so the research work was done using both the primary sources which was in the form of the original text/novel of Mamang Dai and secondary sources in the form of critical works, journals , reference books which was cross examined and finally the research was carried forward using descriptive and analytical method.

Aim: The research paper is an attempt to deal and try to understand Mamang Dai in her novel has dealt with the themes of love and marriage and also to draw out how it helps in

better understanding of the concept of love and marriage in our day to day life and how it helps in dealing with the same existing in our society and in our way of living.

Stupid Cupid

1. Mareb and Dayud

Mareb was the only child of a rich businessman who had made his money through lucrative contract works. She did her schooling in Darjeeling and pursued her higher studies in Delhi. Dayud on the other hand from a respected family, and with his education and fearless rhetoric he was regarded as a worthy political candidate.

"Mareb had returned home for the last time to bid farewell to this ghost of a father whom she did not love but who had, nevertheless clothed her, fed her and, most of all, agreed to send her to Delhi".
P-46, -L-11-14

The reason why Mareb made her last visit to her hometown just to bid farewell to her father. She does not love him as she always felt her father was greedy and as she grew older she could sense the scent of deceit and unhappiness. After the death of her mother her father remarried to a girl who was only a few years older than Mareb. That's when she decided she will leave home forever. But she returned to bid farewell to her father after all he took care of Mareb and her expenses in Delhi so far.

"He was tired and bleary-eyed, but he still had his soft voice that whispered to her that she should marry and settle down".
P-46, L-16-18

Mareb's father had health issues and financial setbacks in his life and career. Since Mareb was his only daughter it was very obvious and understood that he would want her to get

married and see her settled in her life. So, he took the chance and whispered in to her ears what he wants her to do now.

"Coming home was a discovery for her. She understood this place, its secrets and tradition. She too wanted the river run free. Let it run as it was meant to, in all its turbulence and wayward freedom".
P-46, L-20-23

Mareb did not have any intention to stay back in her hometown but coming here made her realize she knew and understood this place. She felt she knew every bit of it, its secrets and tradition. She started to get a feeling to be set free and face whatever comes up in this phase of her life both in turbulence and in wayward freedom. She felt she belonged here.

"Dayud began to court her. He was a big man, intense and energetic, and what overwhelmed her most was that he was entirely fearless".
P-46, L-24-26

Dayud started courting Mareb. She got captivated by the energetic and fearless Dayud. He had a dashing gypsy air attracting young supporters everywhere. He had a great force of personality. His fearless and daring attitude swept Mareb's heart and made her even forget about her love in Delhi.

"What?" she cried. 'Him and that chit of girl? You watch, he'll dump her soon enough. I know him!' She stalked him and accosted him until he threw all caution to the winds and in the small town his affair grew and scandalized and mesmerized everyone".
P-47, L-1-5

Dayud was married earlier to a sharp and a clever woman before courting and falling in love with Mareb. So it was obvious and so natural for a wife to fire back. She fought bitterly to get him back to her life. She was angry and shouted at him and Mareb prophesizing that Dayud would dump off Mareb very soon as she was very much aware of her husband's nature. She stalked him to that level where Dayud became irritated and decided to do away with all the cautions he was taking courting Mareb. As a result his love affair with Mareb

became so scandalized and grew more intensely than drooping off. Their love affair in that small town mesmerized each and everyone.

"To any onlooker they were the perfect picture of happiness , Dayud and Mareb. The best matched couple in town. And certainly it had been a great affair, the talk of the town. It had been a mad, desperate time ". P -56, L-8-11

Both Dayud and Mareb became the talk of the town. Mareb instead of being marked and seen as the 'other' woman in Dayud's life , people considered both of them to be the best matched couple in the town. Their affair was a huge gossip in the town but both stuck with each other and survived the storm. Dayud's angry wife tried every means to get him back but not even an amicable settlement could be made between both of them.

"And so it was that his band of loyal friends continued to support him through this sudden upheaval and with it , his stormy liadon with Mareb. Ultimately it was the birth of a daughter that had clinched everything ". P-56 ,L-18-21

Through out this period of struggle for Dayud and Mareb his close and loyal friends never gave up on him for any kind of help as he himself have always been loyal and generous to his friends too. His friends stuck with him and Mareb in this stormy phase .And finally a time came when Mareb gave birth to a daughter.

" For the life of her she could not imagine how she had let herself go like this , how could she put aside the memory of another love and become involved with a married man". P-56 ,L-23-25

Mareb had a bitter time , going through the entire period of being courted by Dayud then facing all the tantrums created by Dayud's first wife , facing the public in the small town and now being a mother to a daughter. She has a period of self-analysis and self realisation. She tried to calculate her actions and life so far and started realising how could she do such things just for her sake only. She could not even imagine how could she forget her love and attachment for another man and get herself involved with a married man. She just did all those major mistakes with such ignorance and swift speed tat she did not give a second thought before doing it.

" She had swept her off her feet into a world that she belonged to but had never fully known. Until the coming of her daughter changed and fixed everything".

P - 56 , L-26-28

What she did was her choice and where she belonged to but the problem is that she didnot deeply think about it at that time when she was involved . She didnot realize the domain she was entering into , not realising what consequences her involvement would lead her to in the days to come. She was not fully aware of what she was doing and how much it would affect her and others life. The wake up call came with the coming of her child , her daughter into this world. This awakening made her realize the importance of her life in her daughter's life. She had a new responsibility now. Everything changed with the coming of the baby , now everything was set and fixed.

" There's a baby on the way!" the word spread like wildfire. Dayud was completely changed man. The scandal was forgotten; everything was resolving itself".

P- 57, L-1-4

The coming of Mareb and Dayud's baby spread like wild fire in the small town. Their grand love affair, their scandal was forgotten by everyone with the arrival of the baby. It had already changed and stabilized Mareb in her life and Dayud too became a completely changed man. Both were ready to be parents to their baby girl and ready for a new responsibility as parents now.

" Mareb was persuaded to attend a formal meeting with Dayud's mother and receive the traditional gifts of family jewellery and blessings in recognition of her status as the mother-to-be of Dayud's child".

P -57 ,L-5-8

With the coming of the baby in both Mareb and Dayud's life everything changed. They as parents got changed, society changed and people in their life too changed. Now they were considered more as a responsible couple who have become serious and matured citizens. Accordingly , Mareb was persuaded to attend a formal kind of meeting with Dayud's mother to gain her blessings in the form of traditional gifts of the family. It was in recognition of her status as the mother -to-be of Dayud's child. The coming of the baby gives her a fully recognised stability in relationship and above all gave her the status a married woman needs in a family as well as in the society. The baby gave Mareb access to motherhood and also

gave her identity as a wife and a daughter -in-law giving her a social status in the society she was living.

"Now they lived together and Dayud didnot leave her side. He went into frenzy of buying new furniture and fittings , new drapes and all sorts of things including a large collection of expensive shawls and carpets ".
P- 57, L-9-12

With the social recognition of their relationship, they lived together and Mareb was never left alone by Dayud. Dayud was overjoyed with their new status and he went way beyond to decorate their house by ding crazy shopping from furniture, fittings,new drapes,shawls and carpets of all sorts. His happiness and joy of becoming a husband to Mareb and a father could be seen in his actions.Hebwasnjust busy and lost in decorating their house.

" Dayud even began to tiptoe around the kitchen untill Nana told him to go and lie down , he was disturbing everyone. ' Women are irritable at this time".

P-57, L-23-26

The joy of becoming a father can be seen in how Dayud was behaving in the house. He tried by all means to take care of Mareb and te baby by all means. He even tiptoed around his own house to make sure Mareb is not disturbed at all due to him. He was even advised by Nana to just go slowly and lie down silently to sleep .He was being told and advised that women at this time of pregnancy usually tend to get irritated and disturbed very often.Hebproved himself to be a caring and loving husband.

"Asinda was born six weeks premature. It was a difficult delivery and everyone thought the baby or the mother was going to die".
P-57 ,L-29-31

Finally their daughter , Asinda was born. It was a premature delivery. The delivery was a difficult one. Everyone was very curious about the outcome,they wanted to know the well being of both the mother and the child. As the baby got delivered before time so, evryone simply assumed that either the mother or the baby would no survive.

"Nevertheless,Dayud performed a long ritual on the instruction of his mother. The old woman sent for a Shaman from a distant village and together he and Dayud spoke to the spirits and festooned the house with the symbolsbof ancient rites".

P-58 , L-19-23

Dayud being instructed by his mother performed a long ritual with the help of a well known shaman called from a distant village. Both spoke to the spirits and cleared and blessed the house with the agebold rites. Dayud now being a father took every measure starting from medical care as well as traditional way of curing his wife and child. Their responsibility made him feel more responsible as a husband and a father now. He did everything to safeguard the life of both the mother and his daughter.

"So Dayud and Mareb were finally settled together and no one questioned anymore".
P -59, L-28-29

With the coming of Asinda, the daughter of Dayud and Mareb every gossip subsided. Family ties became stronger and most important of all Dayud and Mareb's scandalous life got settled and they got the recognition of a Normal husband and wife. Questions of any kind were never raised against them anymore.

"Dayud's family also owned property in the hills of Uttaranchal and Mareb and Dayud spent few months every year in their farmhouse in the outskirts of Dehradun. This was what made it easy for Mareb when she revived her old love".

P -62, L-6-11

Since Dayud and Mareb belonged to this side of the country and had the privilege of a well to do family with enough property around, they had breaks for months every year in their farmhouse. Their vacations and access to places made Mareb expose to the outside world. And this exposure and freedom provided the opportunity for Mareb to peep outside her marriage and revive her long forgotten old love.

" Everyone wanted something else. Her household kept her running busy for so many years, mistress of the big house and hostess to all her husband's friends, relatives and visitors. It was enough work and occupation to fill a lifetime. But now some things were becoming different".

P - 63, L-5-10

Mareb was quite busy in her life with her new responsibilities as a wife, daughter-in-law, a mother and as the mistress of the house managing the household and also attending friends, relatives and other visitors. It was quite a lot of work enough to keep a single soul too busy. She was happy within herself doing it attending her home, living her life doing the chores. But, slowly some things were changing, becoming different. Mareb's thoughts about her past life, her past love was creeping back in her thoughts. Besides having accomplished

life and a busy life , her thoughts, her memories started to loitre and linger with memories of her past life ,an echo.

" A man's voice was saying to her : 'Is this you life ?Is this what you wanted and why did you went away?'. P- 63, L-11-12

Mareb was going through a phase of motherhood and being the mistress of a big household with many responsibilities which kept her quite busy. Besides doing her chores and responsibilities a change was developing in her. May be it was the search for her self , her identity. Whatever she became after coming back from Delhi to her hometown, nothing was planned and in her bucket list. But many things happened from falling inlove with Dayud to becoming his wife and giving birth to a daughter and taking care of Dayud's household. When things happened she didnot have the time to ponder. But now when she was quite settled in her life with many achievements and responsibilities she started realising her accomplishments as a wife, mother and as an individual. It was her inner voice which sounded like the voice of a man which questioned her asking ifthis wasbher desired life ,what she wanted and if not why did she go away from what she wanted to become and achieve nin her life. The question of self identity rises.

" Sometimes she worried about this dual life , she said, but only in terms of how much she missed the moments of love with Rohit.". Page- 79 ,L-29-31

Mareb, was living and involved in an unsettled way of lifestyle where she was living the life as Dayud's wife where everything seemed so normal and happy. There was no display or sense of in -completeness in Mareb's married life. Everything seemed so normal where the couple talked , ate , laughed in togetherness. It seemed handling her marriage with Dayud was nothing to worry about. But, at times Mareb would get tensed about herself living the dual life , where her life had become being a wife to Dayud and a lover to Rohit. Her worry was not much concerned because of she deceiving Dayud but that she missed Rohit and her love moments with him. Whenever she missed love in her life, Mareb used to panic and sense a void in her life. And for that love , her thoughts would linger towards Rohit.

" She saw all the images shuffled by time rearrange themselves before her. Sometimes she thought: ' It could have been better '. But she modified this again and thought: ' It is all right.'". P-80 , L-12-14

Mareb had memories and images of her past and present life hovering in her mind. Those images kept on shuffling in her consciousness and realised how things and situations have been lined up in her present life. She felt life had so much to give her when she was in state of love and for this feeling and experience she risked everything, she gambled in love. She became careless about her as well as others' life while doing so. She did it solely due to self will, to love and to be loved by Rohit. When she craved for her love, she at times would feel and think that everything, every situation in her life could have been different. And again, her self consciousness returns she thought that though things could have been different but that her current life too is not bad and alright.

"He gave a whoop and looked at her with the eyes of a happy boy. This was a discovery. 'I did not know we could still be comfortable together like this,' she would think amused."

P-80, L-19-22

When Mareb was so engrossed with her love life and married life she hardly realised that she was in a marriage with Dayud and a mother to a daughter. Marriage, after a while might have lost its vigour and become so monotonous for her doing the same things all over everyday. On certain occasions both she and her husband would do things together but not realising it's beauty and worth. On one occasion while watching television, Dayud signalled her to be quite as he was watching a football match and suddenly he whooped her and looked at Mareb's eyes as a happy boy. All of a sudden Mareb discovers that they could still be so at ease with each other and she was quite amused as she did not weigh this in her life and tried to find love and ease in Rohit's arms

"Then she would imagine the lights of Delhi spread out before her. Time changes a lot of things. But everything comes back. Somewhere in the maze of lights a man would be thinking about her."

P-80, L-26-29

Mareb in the process of her thoughts of self realisation of the realities of her life where she had a perfect married life, a perfect life partner, a daughter a status in the society and her hopes to be with her college love. She would shuttle her thoughts every now and then where she visualizes Delhi and its lifestyle before her. This made her feel and understand how time flies and changes things. Though time passes and things change, everything seem to come back in memories and expectations. Then, somewhere she feels that a man, her long forgotten love would be waiting and thinking of her in the huge spread of lights there in Delhi.

"Why should we be so afraid? The worst may not happen. Nothing may come of this. Perhaps the best is yet to come."

P-80, L-30-31

Contemplating on her married life with Dayud and her relationship with Rohit, Mareb got herself entangled between her responsibilities being in the marriage as a wife and a mother and her personal love life with Rohit. Her mind and heart did not come to a same opinion. Her mind makes her think logically about the fact in her life, her home, her husband, her daughter and the society she lives in. On the other hand, her heart yearns and longs for Rohit. She becomes a single entity when she is with Rohit. So, she thinks that all she wants is to give and get happiness whatever the process is or whoever she is with. With all these feelings she thinks that why should one be afraid of the things and situations which is yet to occur. The fear of what is to occur hampers the present situation. The possibility for worse to happen might end up being the best life can offer.

"One had to live and everyone had the right to be happy. Maybe there was a chance to work things out quietly. He was a good man and he had given her everything. She searched through her thoughts. She knew Rohit would always be there for her."

Page-81, L-2-6

Mareb, lost in her thoughts was trying to get a clarity to her present life conditions she was surrounded with. She feels that everyone has the right to be happy and feel good in their life which includes herself too. She thinks about Dayud, her husband who gave her everything in life and that he was a good man. There was no reason to do away with him or end her relationship with him. But, on the other side she could not give up Rohit. She was what she wanted to be when she was with Rohit. Somewhere in her thoughts she knew that Rohit would always be there for her. In this dilemma, she thinks that there might be a chance, a way to get things solved but in a more silent manner.

"In the lull between arrivals and departures Mareb's constant thought was this, as if she were talking to time itself and negotiating with her life. Now, why is it too late? There is always time to go, to come back. Love is love, and destiny is destiny."

P-81, L-8-13

Mareb was coming and going to Delhi and she used to always feel this in those trips that she was talking to time itself and trying to make a deal with her own life. She was managing her trips, meeting Rohit who was her college love, a past and coming back home back to

Dayud who was her present husband , her current life. She was travelling to and fro in time in between her past and her present. So, a sense of question develops in her mind like , was she too late in making a decision?. She felt that there is time for everything, to go and come back whether it be love or destiny.

" Once it had furnished with so much love. Something has changed now. He crept back into bed thinking of Mareb and how she had been in such a hurry to leave for Delhi before them, when they could all have travelled together." P-81,L-19-23

Dayud was pondering on Mareb's recent changes and the display of her behaviour towards him and her responsibilities. On a certain occasion when Dayud, Asinda and Mareb were supposed to go Delhi together but Mareb surprised him by telling that she is going ahead of them and that they come after her. They used to travel together all these years together. This was something which disturbed Dayud's mind. This step by Mareb was not a major one but gave a hit back to Dayud's settled mind all of a sudden. This act made Dayud see the slight changes which took over in Mareb's nature and behaviour. He started realising how his house was well organised filled with laughter and love. He could sense that something changed around which he could not make out.

"Once she had loved him enough to give up the city and her independent ways, everything that was her life , to be with him. Now they seemed to be continually travelling in opposite directions." P-97,L-11-14

In an another instance, where there was a upcoming reception party in honour of a new couple in the family, which would commence within a week's time. Mareb , instead of engaging herself with the preparations shouldering responsibilities in the household decides that she would take a small break with her old friends in Delhi. This really made Dayud quite furious and upset . He realised how he and Mareb was travelling in opposite directions in their day to day life at this stage of their life . Dayud fondly recalled the time when Mareb was ready to give away her independent ways and city life just to be with him when she was deeply in love with him. But, he let her go and she too left without giving a deeper thought to it.

"Dayud was terrified. He was in awe of this new , enigmatic Mareb and he was determined, this time, to keep the marriage vows. He didnt want another woman.If she is the one who wants change I will be the one to remain steadfast, he said to himself.This is a phase and I can wait it out." P-98,L-13-19

This lines showcases what a man Dayud was by nature , it highlights his mindset. He was a man who knew what he wanted in his life. There was a time when he left everything to be committed in marriage with Mareb. When he finds Mareb to be a bit changed in her behaviour, he was just in awe of it. This new transition in Mareb shakes him from within and he is all the more focused and determined not to let go off Mareb from his life. It was very obvious to see the changes in Mareb , how she was trying to live a life not gelling with him .His strong mindset can be seen in the lines where he asserts that he does not need a new woman in his life. Being a man , he could have challenged with an ego to show off. But, no he displays maturity in his thought and his decisions determined to be the one to be strong and face it and wait for this phase in his life to just pass off. He decides that if it was Mareb's decision for a change he would remain steadfast and keep this marriage vows intact. A true display of a gentleman is reflected in Dayud.

" Why are you like this? "

'Like what ?'

'Like this! She tousled his hair lightly. Rushing down like this?'

'I can come anytime I like. You are my wife!' Dayud said ."

P-99, L-1-5

Dayud finally reached Delhi, to Mareb two hours ahead of the normal time to reach Delhi. His restless thoughts about his marital life with Mareb and her probability of choosing someone over him made him race like a maniac. This unrest in him and the eagerness to see Mareb didnot let him care about his looks. He finally meets Mareb in the lodge and when questioned by her on why he rushed like that he asserts that he being her husband , he can come to her anytime and that she is her lawfully wedded wife. These lines display his authority over his wife , how he loves and owns her which every marriage allows a man to feel that way.

" When she saw Rohit again she said , 'I hate to lie. I don't want to lie.'"

P-99, L-16-17

Mareb, was living two lives , one that of a legally wedded wife to Dayud and as a girlfriend to her boyfriend Rohit. She reached a point in her life where she found herself

guilty of lying to her husband and her very existence . The kind of dual life lived by her made her bad about she lying every now and then to rush to Delhi with none reason or the other just to meet her love. And when she did this ,she threw away all her relationships , commitments , her social status and her marriage vows to remain faithful to her husband and maintain the dignity in the society where she lived.

" And what is the use of finding this love again?" Mareb said to me. ' What will I do?'" .
P-101,L-21-22

Mareb , was happy to find Rohit back into her life and she had access to him whenever she wanted to . But , the fact was that she was still in marriage with Dayud and a mother to Asinda. She was no longer a young college going girl giggling and romancing with her boyfriend. She could not do away with her marriage nor accept Rohit publically as her partner. She was meeting and dating Rohit but under the shadow of her marriage. So, she gets a feeling in which she could sense the uneasiness in exercising such a relationship where she gets back to her old , forgotten love but now when she was already married to Dayud and a mother of a daughter. She sensed her uneasiness and difficulty in managing her marital and personal love life. She could not make any decision on her own and move on with Rohit at that point of her life.

Adna and her unnamed married friend

Adna the narrator in the novel and also the owner of the ' M/s Four Seasons ' in New Delhi. She inherited the property from a late dear aunt. She is not married but in a relationship with a married man. Through out the novel, his name is not mentioned.

" The truth was that my current beau was in the real estate business, which meant that he travelled a lot. And the worse luck, he was married." .
P-4, L-18-20

Adna, acquaints the us with the kind of relationship she is into. She is not in a blissful marriage with anyone in her life but she is in a bond with a married man. He was into real estate business so because of his job requirements he was on move. So, this might be one major reasons why his wife and kids never doubted his dual life. Not much is highlighted

about his wife , only that she owned some fabulous property and as a very well known figures as a supporter of the green movement and a activist for the women's empowerment.

" I fell in love with him because at the time I first met him he was wild and rebellious."

P-4 ,L-24-25

Adna , let's herself to be known about her love life how she got inconstantly indulged with a man who was already in marriage vows to a woman. She discloses how her attraction towards him began in the initial days. She confesses how she was drawn towards his wild and rebellious nature.

" He called me everyday and took me to see the airplanes landing at the airport. He drove me on highways and by-lanes, and into the outskirts of the city where we ate curd and sliced onions dripping with lemon juice. I watched him eat and liked the way he tackled food, not in the least self- conscious."

P-4 , L-27-32

Adna tries to open up her initial days and how small efforts made by her friend made her slowly fall in love with him. He used to call her up everyday which made her feel remembered and important to him. On a regular basis he took her around to see the airplanes, on highways and by-lanes, outskirts of the city and together they used to have blissful time eating delicacies around. When they were around eating she used to be quite amused and unconsciously drawn towards his open hearted nature and the way he handled those eateries .He was least bothered about her reaction how he ate and she liked to see him do that being least bothered.

" My life ! Actually , I wasn't sure of anything at all. I didn't know then what I know now and would be thinking about more enigmatic themes: Time , distance , romance and tenderness."

P-5 , L-17-20

Adna, tries to spill her realities about her life , how she wasn't so sure about what and how to do when she indulged in those things. Which she now feels she really knew nothing at that time when it happened. She realises that she knows many things now as compared to those situations when she was totally unsure about time , distance romance and tenderness. She sees herself as a more mature person with much knowledge and experience on the value of time , the gap of distance, the depth and variants of romance and what actually tenderness seems like.

" I first set my eyes on my friend, just like that , when he surfaced right next to us shaking his wet hair and smirking at us like a crocodile.".

P-7 , L-23-25

Adna , recalls how she for the first time met her friend coming out of a swimming pool in a resort in New Delhi. Her friend Amine took her there to beat the summer heat as Adna could not bear the heat as she came from a small town Itanagar, in the Himalayan foothills .When she first saw him , he actually came out right beside Adna and Amine trying to shake off his wet hair and looking at them with fixed eyes like a crocodile.

" Things happen.After that it was rooms , bags , clothes. In the untidiness of love I scattered my belongings everywhere.".

P-7 , L-26-28

She gives a glimpse of how her relationship with a man who was already married began. She accounts how their life was never the same anymore. They were in a relationship which developed between them and they didnot pay heed to anything than their love and attraction . They were seeing and dating each other at places and Adna confesses how she along with her love and things got scattered when both of them were around each other.

" Right from the start my friend said: ' Guilt is useless. No , I dont feel guilty. I believe what has to happen , happens'. Even so , that first first summer I tried to put distance between us.".

P- 7 , L-29-30

The relationship developed between both Adna and her friend started on the basis of their mutual attraction for each other. And they were totally not in their own control of their senses then. But, when a sense of guilt feeling developed within Adna, he made it very clear to Adna that feeling guilty is useless. And he further made himself very clear that he doesn't feel guilty for what has happened rather he believes that when things are to happen, it happens . But , Adna having realised the mistake she has done in loving someone else's husband, a married man, she tried to distance herself from him during her first summer by keeping herself busy travelling to and fro to her hometown trying to bring the geographical distance as a barrier to herself and her friend in New Delhi.

" What did I want to say? Ah! So many reasons for loving and not loving! I thought I recognised the grey areas , yet I came back to him every time , realizing that there was no protection from the senses.".

P-8 , L-19-21

Adna confesses about her situation in being in love with her friend. She wants to bring to light how she did try to create and bring a distance between in terms of emotional

level and geographical barriers. She declares that there are many reasons for loving this married man and many more for trying not to love him. But, everytime she tried not to love and avoid him she found herself going back to him. She realized that her intellect tried to make her avoid loving him but she could not protect her heart and other senses from his love and attraction.

"We met , made love , ate together sometimes , and then carried on with our business. P-10, L-15-16

This became the kind of routine and life of both Adna and her friend. She brings forth what kind of adaptation they had developed with the passage of time. It was a mature and a mutual kind of attachment they had with each other in their day to day life. They used to casually meet , spend quality time with each other, eat together and then be back to their normal life busy with their own life and business.

" There were no supporting ties like children , joint accounts or a network of relatives to keep us together. I must say it was a freedom that I had asked for."

P-10, L-19-22

Adna brings out the practicality of her relationship with her friend. She talks about the freedom she experiences being in such a relationship. She talks about the reality of her bonding where she does not have any social obligations like having kids ,sharing joint accounts no relatives from both their sides as couples usually do. And such things keep a relationship binding together like beads in a necklace. But , in this relationship with a already married man still in a marriage,she is free of all ties. They just do what they feel like living individual interests. Adna, had no expectations either besides her friend in her life. She was actually living and enjoying her life without social obligations as a married woman which she always craved for and calls it freedom .

" Where do you think we' end our days?'. I asked instead. He gave this serious thought.' really don't know,' he replied. Amine had hinted once or twice that such affairs as mine were dead ends.".

P-31, L-25-28

Adna continued with her relationship with her married friend and their life went on without any recognition or vows. Both of them did not have any problem with their life together or with each others individual life. Oneday, simply she questioned him about how they would end up their days. He tried to look for a reasonable answer but he could not give one to her, he really did not know. Adna recalled how her friend Amine had told her many times that a relationship like hers would meet a dead end. Such relationships definitely had no future and no scope for prospering.

" I was carrying on with someone whose name I could not disclose! Yet when we were together there were no differences." P-53, L-21-23

Adna reveals her fact that she was carrying forward a relationship with a man whose name she could not even reveal..This was may be because he was a married man and he belonged socially to another woman who was his legal wife. So, she could not disclose his name very much being aware of the reality. But, to her it made no difference because her world changed when they were together. The only thing which bothered them was the joy, the completeness they felt in their togetherness.

" She was aghast at my situation and said I should dump the guy immediately. There were so many men around; couldn't I have found someone else, someone single? ". P-68 , L-29-30

Adna's friend Green, from Dimapur living in Delhi was shocked to know if her relationship with her friend who was a married man. Being a good friend she suggested Adna to dump him immediately . Further she advised Adna that there are men out there who are single and ready to commit a relationship. So, why is she in such a relationship with a already married man who is well settled in life.

" I have to go away for a while," he said.

' Go where?' I said.

' Well to Canada,' he replied in a tentative voice." P-116, L- 29-31

Adna's friend one day told her that he has to be away from her for sometime. On that note she got quite surprised and unconsciously asked him where he is going. He replied her that he is planning for a trip to Canada. When she heard it ,then she realized that he had a

wife and family there in Canada which made her quite naive .All this while he was with her and she felt so complete with him and forgot the reality that he was someone else's husband. So, it was a shock for her when he said that he will be away for a while from her.

" The thought came to me that he was dumping me, right here in the middle of the city under the whirring fan, surrounded by potted plants. P-117 , L-9-11

The thought of her friend going away for a while away from her suddenly made her experience a void in her life. This might be because of the close attachment both had in their personal and day to day life. Both of them were so used to being around each other that the thought itself to be separated for sometime time pricked her soul from within. She suddenly gets a feeling that he is dumping her amidst everything in her life right there in the middle of the city in her lonely world.

" I turned away and would not speak to him , I was embarrassed by this. I could not control myself. I sat there , a little bewildered , and wondered exactly what it was that was making me behave so strangely." P- 117 , L-15-18

Adna was aware of their existence and their relationship from the very beginning itself. She knew he was a married man and had a family. But, suddenly she reacted in impulse to what he told her that he would be going to Canada for a while. She knew her reaction was weird but it happened, she had no control over her feelings and her reaction towards her friend. She too was quite surprised by her way of reacting to the situation before her , she wanted to know what exactly it was. Their attachment with each other have been for quite a while and it was so obvious that a certain kind of sense of owning and belongingness even if one knows the reality. Adna too was thinking what made her do that which seemed so weird to her because she knew it from the start who he and she was. And situations and things like this would turn up regardless of their expectations.

" Green said. 'Guys are greedy. What's to keep him glued to you? Nothing!'"

P-117, L-19-20

Looking at her situation one of her friends, Green tells her that men are usually greedy in the matter of relationships. What she meant was that men are opportunists in having such kind of relationship where least of emotions are involved. They can develop relationships with many women without actual feelings for them. She was actually trying to give comfort to Adna as Adna seemed too involved and worried with her friend going to

Canada . Green wanted to let Adna understand the fact that her friend was going back to his wife and family and she was only his mistress. Even if her friend kept a very congenial relationship with her he could not leave his wife and family. He wanted to keep everything he wants with him , the only thing was what was his priority at that time. So, green wants Adna to accept the fact that he is married ,this was meant to be this way always so what was it to keep herself glued to him like that actually it should be nothing.

" I think you should stop wasting your life like this. You let this happen."

P-118 , L-18

Green, being a very good and truthful friend to Adna could not see her in this situation. Adna always knew the fact about her man that he was married and has a family. But, her reaction towards him when he said he will be gone for sometime to Canada quite upsets her and she reacts to astonish herself and her friends too. Looking at her recent development towards her relationship with her man , Green was worried for Adna and so advised and suggested her not to waste her life like that anymore. And that whatever has happened is all because Adna let it happen to herself all along for so long.Green wants her to move forward, accept the fact and make things happen better and look for a beautiful life ahead.

" How cold and cruel the words sounded. The truth is always like that. Unbearable! Now I would have a lifetime to ponder these things and weigh the meaning of life.A stupid life, I thought bleakly. Too late! "

P-118 ,L-21-24

Whatever her friends told her Adna, heard it and tried to understand what they actually meant for her. She realizes that whatever they said was for her good and for seeking her a proper direction in life instead of living a life leading her nowhere. She takes those advices to her gut and thinks that she have to ponder over all these things to value the real meaning of what life really means. At that point of her life she found herself and her little life quite stupid and of all she thought it was already too late.

" I had been struggling with the arrangements of love. What if my secret love died suddenly? No one would think to call me because no one would know about me."

P- 137 , L-1-4

Adna, was giving a thought on time and life and then suddenly she got a feeling that how things could just end all of a sudden in our life. She developed a feeling that she was

making all possible arrangements to make her love life run smooth though it was with a married man. She thought what if her man dies all of a sudden ? She realized that no one would let her know about it as no one from his family knew about her involvement with him. She has no social recognition with him as someone being so important , a part of his life. This thought made her gain a little unrest and she felt sad about the fact and her situation being the other woman in his life without any recognition.

" Many marriages, too , appeared mismatched , yet men and women managed to keep up a front. They fought , betrayed each other ,but bigger obligations reminded them that despite the disappointments and failures , each day passed."

P- 137, L-9-13

Adna, pondering over her relationship with her friend who was married put her through a lot of inner conflict within herself. She realized that her relationship was not a ideal ,a perfect one but she also found that even marriages which takes place blissfully doesn't seem complete and perfect. She felt some marriages were mismatched ones where the couple are not compatible with each other. Some marriages see betrayal, where couples betray each other but still they stick to that kind of marriages just to show te society,their families as a complete and happy marriage . Besides the disappointments and various failures in the marriage,people prefer to carry forward their so called marriage due to many obligations in their life, family and society. But, besides her friend being married he took was still in a relationship without name with her.

" My friend and I. What were the chances we'd grow old together?"

P-139, L-28-29

The lines are Adna's personal thoughts about herself and her friend when they were together one evening.As they were passing by they came across many buildings and Adna set her eyes on the windows of those buildings and her thoughts were on those people behind the window panes. She started having many thoughts about a house ,the design.the vision of a old man and woman sitting in their chairs on the veranda and talking long through out the night.She simply had a thought of her vision and questioned herself of whether there were any chances that both she and her friend could grow old together.Snce he is a married man , there is no surety that he will be with her . Everything was so unsure about their relationship with no name , no commitments forever and ever. They were together now as they were

adults and did what they wanted with each other. Her growing attachment with him made her question herself with a unanswerable answer.

" I saw the lights of the city and suddenly all I wanted was to go away. I didnot want to be in Delhi. I didnot want to own Four Seasons. I felt shocked and ashamed of my stupidity.".

P-146, L-14-17

The sudden demise of Adna's friend Amine who was murdered created panic in the mind of Adna. She started the business, Four Seasons to have a name for herself, give herself and identity in life. And she accomplished er dream successfully and she loved and enjoyed everything so far. She even disclosed her love for Delhi, that she felt she belongs there. But , with the sudden situation of Amine being murdered, her thoughts suddenly changed for the city. She did not want to be in Delhi anymore, she just wanted to go away far from it. She was ashamed of her thoughts and calculations on Delhi and it's lifestyle. Earlier, she always used to feel so safe being in Delhi and life seemed easier with unfamiliar people around. Now, suddenly she wants to do away with everything which attaches her with Delhi. She even does not want to own her business in ,Four Seasons. The city which she always loved and which she thought she knew it so well now seemed so uncertain and unsafe. All she wanted was to go away from the cityof Delhi.

" He looked uncertain and he hugged me hard when the time came to say goodbye.What was there to say? Perhaps the past would come curving back oneday and we would be friends again , this time free of all doubt.".

P-159, L-26-30

Adna was all set and ready to leave for her hometown. Her friend came to see her off and say goodbye. The goodbye was not an easy one for both of them. Her friend seemed so uncertain because things were happening one after the other without any prior planning. They had nothing to say to each other regarding the situations which crept up like a snake. All he could do was to hug her so tight which showed how he felt for her and his deep connection with her. Adna too was quite uncertain about the turn up of her life and the current situations she was dealing with. But, she hopes that her past might come back in her future and that she and her friend might be friends once again which would have no doubts about their feelings for each other . Adna actually was wishing that her love life would be more honest and more promising which won't cater any doubts.

" Hey!" my friend said on the hissing , crackling phone. He was in Canada. He would be back soon! Yes , I am fine ,I said. Distance lends ease ."

P-153 , L-20-22

The lines tells about Adna's friend giving her a call from Canada, asking about her and that he will be back to Delhi very soon. She too acquaints him about herself that she too was doing good. When they said goodbye to each other when Adna was leaving for her hometown things seemed so uncertain. But, now with this phone call things becomes very clear and prominent that they are not done with each other yet. Both of them shared a relationship which was beyond physical attachments. Distance proved certain things to be more clear which earlier lacked clarity when they were close to each other. Keeping someone in their mind even when they aren't together clears the fog in the mind that they genuinely loved each other . The given lines also gives a hope that both of them will be together once again as Adna too wished before leaving Delhi.

" Some things in the world are never resolved, like the recurrence of the past , the flow of ocean currents , the ebb and tide of human desire." P-153 , L-29-31

Adna , after getting the whereabouts of her friend got her answer to many of her thoughts and questions which caused her aches in her heart. She felt that some things in this world are never resolved. There are things which get a permanent solution but some don't have any explanation to it , unfinished forever. She thinks about things like things turning up again and again from one's past, ocean currents flow and the tide of human desires Things like this has no calculation, no perfect timing, no boundary and no end to it. Something 's will never be resolved, like her relationship with her married friend. They don't have any future which gives her a social status in the society but still she too will be with him without any surety odpf being together always and grow old together. They don't have any answer to their relationship like they don't have any control over their human desires.

Amine and Rizvi

Amine was from up north, near Jammu. Her father used to work in the Oill and Natural Gas in Assam . She was married happily to Rizvi who was a lawyer and they had two sons

and settled in Delhi. Amine was a very good friend to Adna , the owner of , M/s Four Seasons since their school days and still they were good friends till date. She is a very dear and a helpful friend to Adna , she understood Adna and who helps Adna in setting up her business in the M/s Four Seasons and also in finding a flat to settle in Delhi.

" The one who was always talking about monogamy and wondering if love was possible without adultery." P-2 , L-30-32

This is what Amine was to Adna, a strong headed lady who believed in monogamy and she used to ponder if love was possible without adultery. Amine's belief to exercise monogamy in her marriage was quite clear but when she saw things around her , how couples try to rediscover something there rose questions like what what are they looking for.

" We were at Amine's place everyday, especially as she was always at home , either tidying up or cooking." P-29 ,L-29-31

According to Adna, Amine was a perfect housewife as she always wanted to be. Amine enjoyed her status married to a man who would be the provider and she a homemaker . Amine wanted a life , a house where she stays at home cooking and doing other household chores. Her marriage to Rizvi gave her freedom to live the life she wanted. That's why Adna and her cousin would end up being in Amine's house everyday because they knew she would be home either cooking or doing something else at home.

" Amine set up house independently , dressed exactly like us and the only piece of jewellery she wore were her silver anklets. Amine was quite traditional in her outlook . She didn't want to work. She enjoyed motherhood and said that all she wanted was to keep a good home with good food and nice things for her family."

P-31 , L-11-16

The lines give a glimpse of who and what exactly Amine is as a person . Amine's family were well travelled and liberal minded middle class people and this lifestyle had a huge impact on Amine's nature and personality . Her upbringing had been done on different circumstances and places where she met people of different areas and their culture too. So, instead of being a traditional muslim lady she chooses difference in her sense of dressing .She

dresses like Adna and others and instead of embellishing herself with other ornaments she prefers to wear only her silver anklets . She was very independent and modern in her approach to life unlike any other married women. Though she was very practical and modern kind of a woman she was very traditional by choice, she didnot want to do any job.

She wanted to enjoy being a woman, a mother ,a wife. She wanted to keep a good , peaceful and a happy home which has good food and keep nice things for her family. She was truly a nice and a perfect home maker. She carved out her thoughts to reality of being her husband's wife ,a mother to her kids , a perfect loving daughter -in-law to her in-laws.

" It seemed she possessed the logic of love. It was evident in her air of composure and it compelled respect. In her own way she was solid and true."

P-31 , L-17-19

Adna was perfect as a homemaker. She had a charismatic personality of composure and poise which she carried gracefully. The kind of caricature she had about the concept of love and on a monogamy kind of marriage she was very true and seemed to have found in Rizvi. He allowed Amine to be as she wanted to be in terms of dressing, keeping her house ,not wanting to do a job and to keep friends of her choice. The manner in which she carried herself was quite appealing and she got respect at her own way. She stood by her belief and her practical lifestyle, she was strong and a true person who saw reality and was quite practical.

" Your friend , the Muslim lady , is she at the hotel?' he said.

' I don't know. Why?'

' I saw some fellows jumping over the wall and running there...".

P-141, L-16-19

A Nepali man , whom Adna had never seen before came to Adna's place and enquired about her friend , Amine . He addressed Amine as the Muslim lady , he wanted to confirm if Amine was in the hotel, Four Seasons . On getting a no from Adna, he tells that he

had seen some people jumping over the wall and running. It sensed some kind of danger for both Adna and Amine.

" Come , ' I said. Let's have a look.' I saw the lights were on in the floor where I knew the main bedroom was and I called for Amine." P- 143 ,L-13-15

Adna had never seen this man earlier in her life but suddenly at this point of time , both of them relied on each other. Adna called him to come along with her and check the inside of Amine's house along with her. And as they both did , Adna could see the lights were on and knowing the locations of the house she kept on moving and calling out Amine's name while looking for her,

"Something has happened,' I said.' At Amine's place. There's bread and everything lying on the floor..." P-143 , L-9-31

Adna while looking for Amine in her house saw things strewn I the floor. So, she after sensing the danger there of a mishap she runs back to the neighbour, the tarot lady and informs her that something has happened at Amine's place. She further tells the tarot lady that things were strewn around on the floor. She was scared and that feel like some kind of mishap has happened over there.

" The landlord and another young man jumped up and and rushed outside and they were back within seconds shouting , 'She's dead! She's dead! Oh my God, they'e killed her!'. P-144, L-13-16

On being informed by the tarot lady and Adna, the landlord along with another young man checked Amine's house and found her dead. That's when they cameback i a few seconds and informed everyone shouting that Amine has been murdered. 'They' here refers to anyone who might have killed Amine. They going in and confirming about Amine's death clarifies the air of the suspense which was swirling around for sometime in the area.

" The police arrived and they said the victim have been killed with a small knife. There were seventeen stab wounds". P-144, L-25-26

The police comes to the crime scene and investigates the scenario and the situation in Amine's residence. After investigating Amine's home and her dead body , they reported that she was stabbed to death by the murderer. Talking about the crime scene it was obvious that the victim tried to resist because the manner in which the things were strewn during the hassle and tassel. Amine bwas killed mercilessly, she got seventeen stabs on her body.

" Why Amine? She was the one who would tell us, It's better to be careful,' but she opened her doors to help me deal with the workmen and give them sherbet in the hot afternoons and scold them when they dawdled or were sloppy.".

P- 147, L-17-20

Amine's sudden death was a huge shock for everyone in the locality and for Adna it was a news which pierced her heart. She questioned why was it Amine? She recalled how Amine would tell her to be careful around with people. But, the same Amine became so normal and opened up her doors to help Adna with the workmen. Amine would serve the workmen with cool sherbet in the afternoons.. Amine not only did that but she would also check on the workmen if they were doing their work properly or not and if necessary she would scold them for being lazy. Somewhere in her heart Adna felt responsible for what had happened to Amine because Amine became a bit of careless in handling the workmen by opening up her house inorder to help Adna. If Amine would have never dealt with these men then she might have escaped the mishap and be alive.And it was all because Amine wanted to help Adna with whatever help she could give her friend Adna.

" When they had contacted Rizvi they heard him saying, 'No...!' Then it was all silence. The family were afraid for him. But Rizvi was like a rock. 'Sssh... Don't cry,' he said, when I embraced him weeping.".

P-148 , L-7-10

With the gruesome murder of Amine in her own house Rizvi , Amine's husband was contacted and let him know the entire scenario. The only thing they could hear from Rizvi was 'No...!' and everything went silent from his side. The news was beyond a reality for him , how could this have ever happened to Amine ? He could not digest the fact that his dear wife Amine was no more. Looking at his silence, his family members were quite afraid for him as he was not showing his emotions and that it could have a bad reverse effect on his

mental health. But, Rizvi proved himself hard as a rock who could withstand anything. He consoled Adna telling her not to cry or weep while Adna was giving him a consoling embrace.

" He wanted Amine to be buried in her true home , he said. This was the moment in that terrible grief- stricken time that Rizvi broke down and covered his face with his hands.".
P-148 , L-13-15

Rizvi and Amine complimented each other as husband and wife. They had everything in life and of all both experienced marital bliss. Amine always wanted to be a loving and caring housewife. She wanted to have a family whom she could take care of cook for them and own a house where happiness dwell. But, now with the sudden demise of Amine everything ended. Rizvi, being a understanding and a loving husband knew exactly what his dead wife might want so that her soul can rest in peace. So he decided that he would take Amine's body to her family home in Jammu . Rizvi wanted his wife Amine's mortal remains to be buried in her real home. While he was saying all these to Adna and others that he covered his face with his hands and started letting his emotions flow out through his tears. He no longer could hold his grief hidden anymore in losing his dear wife Amine.

" So many arrangements, so many unforeseen details , even to have the permission to remove the dead body of your own wife , to carry home "

P- 148 , L-15-17

Amine's sudden demise was a shock for everyone. The murder wasn't expected at all so when the gruesome murder happened, things took its own turn including the intervene of the police. Since it was not a natural death, investigation of the case was still going. In such a situation things become a bit complicated. So, it was kind of creating discomfort for Rizvi in accomplishing the last rites of Amine in a normal way. As Rizvi had to take permission for every step he was going to take up including taking the dead body of his own wife to home became problematic. This , a proper complete happily married couple and their simple happy married life comes to a halt.

Jia and marriage

Jia was the cousin of Adna the narrator in the novel and the owner of M/s Four Seasons in New Delhi. She was a divorcee and she had come to Delhi to pursue a course in journalism.

" My cousin arrived by train with a sack of rice and an assortment of bundles and plastic packets full of home- made preparations." P-26 , L- 17-19

The lines gives a glimpse of Jia's entry in Delhi. Adna tells how her cousin Jia, entered the city of Delhi. Adna gives a heartwarming entry made by Jia , she tells that Jia arrived by train with a sack of rice and also with all kinds of goodies which was home made. She brought these all the way from her hometown. This actually reveals how people from Northeast usually do when they travel or visit someone's house. It is actually a gesture of care , love and appreciation for the person they have brought it for. It shows their sense of belongingness and it creates an aura of oneness.

" Jia was a reporter who wrote articles that were anti everything. She pursued her addiction to investigation with gusto , and had her fans." P-26 ,L-27-29

The lines opens up about what Jia does and what she has as her passion. We get a glimpse of what kind of a personality is Jia and what is her calibre as a reporter. Being a reporter, Jia wasn't submissive to any kind of flaws in what she reported. She had her own addiction in investigating the news she was interested in and when she did she dared to do it in her own way. She stood to her ethics as a reporter and would report to authenticate the reality of the news she dealt with. So, as a result she had a cue of people who disliked her but at the same time , she had her fans too who loved and stood by her.

" No one would have guessed that Jia had lost a baby at eighteen and that the young man who was the father had deserted her ; or rather she had kicked him out. He was so abusive and irresponsible that the baby had died at childbirth."

P-28 , L-20-24

The lines tells that Jia was once married and she even got pregnant with a baby at the age of eighteen which she eventually lost at childbirth. Not only that the young man who was her husband left her all alone in that situation. It was a bit too early for Jia to be pregnant at that age but things could have been different if she would have got the support of her husband. That man was abusive towards Jia and on top of that he was a irresponsible person who had no consciousness of the kind of relationship he had with Jia and what were his responsibilities as a husband towards his wife and family. All together it can be seen that the husband of Jia was a total mismatch for Jia who was so strong with her thoughts so she had to let him out of her life.

" Then she quarrelled with her mother and left the village saying she could not live with a man she did not respect. She underlined the word ' respect .'"

P-28 ,L-25-27

Jia was a woman who was very straight forward and strong headed. She knew that she could no longer lie to herself entangled in a relationship which has no life and scope to it anymore. She wanted to free herself from an abusive and an irresponsible man who had no basic understanding of being in a relationship, making any commitments and shouldering any responsibility as the man of the house. After loosing her baby during childbirth,she made herself very clear to her mother that she can't live with a man for whom she has already lost her respect. She stressed the word 'respect' , because problem comes in any marriage in any family but if a couple respect eachother they can face it and move on . But , if respect itself is missing in a relationship then anarchy develops and it leads to further chaos in life which Jia felt she could not let happen. So, she takes the huge leap of walking away from such a abusive husband and a relationship.

" She wrote about issues of public interest , about women , religion and insurgency.".

P-28, L-28-29

The new and empowered Jia moved on in her life. She let her voice and views to be heard out writing on various topics and issues of public interest , women , religion and issues like insurgency too . She was not afraid to write or speak on any vulnerable issues which could harm her individually, her reports used to based on perspective. She stood strong in her ethics of being a ideal reporter not giving heed to whims and fancies.

" Even if the young man who had claimed part of her life she simply said : ' We were too young and too poor.'".

P- 29 , L-12-13

Jia was a strong woman and she didnot hesitate to talk on any topic whether bit had to do it others or herself. She had a clear view of what she saw and felt. She even didnot back out not talking about her relationship with her divorced husband with whom she spent a portion of her life She in a much mature tone gives her opinion that both him and herself were actually very young when they entered such a serious relationship and that they were very poor to maintain their married life. Both of them lacked maturity and since they married too early also means that they weren't financially stable too. Jia simply does not accuse anyone anymore because she was quite mature and far sighted now and could see the real reasons for the untimely demise of their marriage.

Sheila and her husband

Sheila is the domestic helper in Adna's , M/s Four Seasons in New Delhi. She is a married woman to an unnamed autorickshaw driver in the novel. Together they had a six to seven year old daughter. She was looking for a job so that she can support her husband in running their house expenses smoothly.

" It was quite an occasion when Four Seasons hired a maid named Sheila."

P-34 , L-3-4

Adna's, Four Seasons urgently needed a maid for her lodge and accordingly he told her friend Amine and then word spread through Amine's maid and finally it was that moment when Adna had Sheila hired as the first maid ever for the new lodge. Sheila's entry to the lodge and Adna's life was quite a dramatic event.

" It's me! It's me! as she jumped out of an autorickshaw.' He's my husband,' she motioned with her hand to the driver and smiled ."

P-34, L-7-9

Sheila the maid , whom M/s Four Seasons hired made her entry to the lodge in a grand way. She jumped out of the autorickshaw which her husband was driving by herself introducing herself to everyone there in the lodge as if she wanted to say this that there was nothing to be surprised or shocked and that she is Sheila their new maid. Sheila also introduced the man driving the autorickshaw as her husband . So, the lines make it very clear about who is Sheila and what is her marital status.

"Have pity on us,' she implored. We are very poor. My husband has to pay three hundred rupees every day to the boss, whether he can make that much or not. The petrol cost and food and oil is down to us. It's too much , memsahib!' she said. ' I can do everything. Please give me work."

P-34 , L-12-16

The lines highlight the domestic and financial condition in Sheila's family. She tries to pacify Adna to employ her as her family is too poor. She tries to bring before Adna's knowledge that even though her husband was driving an autorickshaw, their financial condition was quite bad. She tells that her husband had to daily pay a fixed amount of rupees three hundred whether he could earn that much or not every day. And besides that the cost of living for the family including petrol and food and oil was heavy on them. Sheila was actually trying to convince Adna why and how much she needed a job at that point in her life ,she pleaded for the job.

" The city is a cruel place , memsahib. We don't have enough to eat,' continued Sheila , puckering her face. It was a common story . 'Okay, ' I said . You work here , but we ' ll try with a trial period ."

P- 34 , L- 22-25

The lines stress on how Sheila tried to further pursue Adna to give her a job there so that she can be financially secure and help her husband in running their small family in a cruel city like Delhi. Though her plight was a very moving one but the story

seemed quite familiar with everyone. And to her surprise , Adna gave her the job but with this condition that it will be in trial basis.

" Sheila clasped her hands dramatically to her breast, said 'Thank you please, madam !' in English and turned briskly to her husband and exclaimed, ' Ho gaya!..".

P-34 , L-28-30

The content and happiness experienced and expressed by Sheila can be seen in the lines. Her body gestures quite displays her gratitude to the employer, Adna as she clasped her hands to her breast and said ' Thank you please, madam!' in english. Her happiness can be seen and felt from the manner of her expression and how she turns to her husband and gives a confirmation that it's done. Though the job is of a small status it means a lot to Sheila and her household because the kind of adjustment they had to do in their life with the earnings of her husband by driving a autorickshaw was very painful. With a job in the lodge, she could atleast help her husband in bearing the expenses to some extent.

" The gods had answered her prayers and she had got the job! She would do everything, she said, watch.".

P-35, L-6-7

The lines talks about Sheila's unexplainable happiness in obtaining her job in the lodge. She had lots of expectations from that job as she really wanted some kind of financial enhancement besides her husband's earnings from the autorickshaw. Besides working so hard her husband struggled to meet their needs fulfilled. So, she tries to express her happiness and gratitude by telling her husband that gods had answered her prayers. She really needed the job and she really was committed to do justice to her jobs requirement and she told her husband and assures about her intentions that she would do everything the job requires of her.

Sheila's role displays how a poor lady in marriage, though poor does not seek any other means to be happy or fulfilled. But , she showcases how though poor the couple strives together though thick and thin. Instead of adding problems for her husband she has this basic understanding of trying to be of some help to her husband by looking for a job and help him financially though in meagre amount. Sheila and her husband displays and example of a perfect married couple in marriage.

Sunita lal and R.K lal

Sunita Lal, married to Engineer, R.K Lal was is a customer in the Four Seasons lodge. Both the couple displays some kind of complexity in their married life as seen in their short stay in the lodge.

" Sunita stayed intensely focused on her thoughts.'. People like him deserve nothing but a good kick. I should throw him out but no! Never! Never! I ' ll make him suffer.".

P -107, L-11-13

By the time Mrs Lal entered the lodge she tried to , make Adna know about her situation and what she felt about her husband R.K Lal . She made it very clear to Adna that she knew her husband was having an affair and betraying her in their marriage. The lines highlights what Sunita thought about her husband Mr Lal, she somewhere in her heart thought of throwing him out of her house and her life but then she realizes that kicking and throwing him out won't give her peace. Rather, he should be kept and made to suffer bit by bit.

" L' affair! It was a disease. A virus that jumped from country to country, crossed oceans and deserts and floated into cities and streets. It is highly contagious. It struck anywhere, everywhere.".

P-107, L-27-30

Mrs Lal, was furious within because she knew about her husband's nature and habits. So, she was just talking to Adna in general about love affair. According to her opinion, it's a virus that has jumped around from countries, oceans, oceans, deserts, cities and streets. She further vsays that it spreads very quickly, it is everywhere. Her view throws a light on the mentality of a normal married woman who has been betrayed, deceived by their husband in marriage. When a woman is hurt and felt cheated her belief in everything specifically love becomes quite ambiguous. Her belief once shaken , then it becomes quite difficult to gain back to its normal vigour infact it never comes back. The seed of doubt once sown , it never ceases to create further doubts.

" He thinks I don't know,' Sunita said. ' But I know everything. I ' ll kill him!.".

P-108 , L-5-6

Sunita, Mrs Lal let's her sorrow flow out to Adna who is a stranger to her but she chose to tell her that Mr Lal thought that Sunita is not aware of his on-going affair. But, she tells Adna that she knew everything about him and his affair and that she would kill him. She displays a typical normal wife in marriage who is hurt.

" Sunita Lal's rival was a hairdresser. She owned a beauty parlour. It had been going on for sometime and when Sunita accosted her husband she had been stunned by his self-righteous anger, though he did not deny that he knew the woman.

P-108 , L-7-11

Sunita was aware of her husband 's ongoing affair for quite sometime. She did her own research to know the whereabouts of the lady whom her husband was having an affair. It has come to knowledge that her rival was a hairdresser and that she owns a beauty parlour. How hard it is for a wife to know of such a thing in her married life. And when Sunita tries to confront with her husband about the affair, he instead of being ashamed of himself and his act he reacts with such an anger as if he is not wrong at all. His self esteem about himself was so high and this behaviour stuns Sunita. He should have been humble , feel sorry for his infidelity in their marriage and be submissive but his behaviour was so ridiculous . Though he seemed angry and loud but he did not deny about not knowing the woman about whom Sunita, his wife was talking about.

" He wanted a divorce, yes! But she would never give it. Never! How dare he even assume such a thing? 'I ll make his life hell. He doesn't know me,' she said."

P-108 , L-13-15

Sunita spoke these lines to Adna telling her that when she tried to confront with her husband regarding his affair but instead he showed so much anger covering up his infidelity. He should have shown some kind of remorse about his act and assured his wife not to do it any further. He rather shouts her back saying that if she does not like it then she can give a divorce if she wants to do so. Sunita tells Adna that she has no intention to divorce him because he actually is wanting a divorce from her so that he can be free to do what he likes. She could calculate that her husband wanted her to divorce him and that she would never do that. She decides that though it is painful to be in such a case , she would stay in the marriage and make life a hell for her husband Mr Lal. She asserts that her husband does not know her well , what she could do .

" I would leave him tomorrow,' she said, 'just like that ,but I can't, because of my son."

P-108 , L-26-27

Sunita Lal further tells Adna that it's not like she can't leave Mr R.K Lal and that if it was only in her case she could leave him immediately without any second thoughts but she can't just do it because she has a son . And she can't do anything based on her impulse , her impulsive decision could hamper her sons future life. So that was ahge concern of hers not leaving her husband inspite of his infidelity in marriage.

" My mother doesn't know anything, she would have a heart attack ! But I know she would tell me to wait it out if she heard. What should I do?"

P- 108, L-29-31

Sunita Lal was still talking to Adna about her husband's infidelity in their marriage and asserts that her mother is unaware of the entire situation in her married life and that if she would have known about it she would have certainly gone through a heart attack. Again she tells that even if her mother knew it somehow she knows her mother so well what she would have to say on this , she would still tell her to wait and see how and what turns out later. What she meant to say was that her mother would definitely not want the marriage to end like that. Her mother would want her to save the marriage and not make things break off so easily .

" He wants that hair dresser , let him have her! We' llsee,' she said angrily."

P- 109 , L-5-6

These lines are spoken by Sunita Lal, a wife who faced infidelity by her husband in their marriage. The lines display her anger , her jealousy of a deceived wife . She knew who is that other woman in her husband's life and asserts in anger that even if her husband wants to have the other woman in his life it won't be that easy for him to do so as she ,his legal wife still stands on his way.

" Oh, excuse me,' she said, looking around and up towards the rooms. I came to meet...' She her out a card. I took it and read ' R.K. Lal, Engineer'.'Oh, but they ' ve left,' I said .

P- 109 , L- 12-14

Adna gives a display of her conversation with that hairdresser Mrs Lal spoke to her about and how she handles the woman at that instance . She tells how a woman one hot

afternoon comes up to the lodge and hands out a visiting card with R.K Lal's name in it , Sunita's husband. Adna takes the card and could easily make out who that woman was and why she came looking for Mr Lal. Se took the stride in her hands and tried to play well. She said immediately that they have left , trying to indicate by giving a hint to the lady standing there that he was not staying there alone , he was with his family members.

" He left last evening,' I corrected myself and looked at her with interest as if I was concerned that she might be a relative of theirs , pretending that I didn't know anything."

P- 109 , L- 19-21

Adna displays a complete host here who knows every customer of hers and their side of story too. Accordingly she heard Sunita Lal 's side of story and later when that hairdresser came looking for Mr Lal, she could easily make out who she was and why she came there to the lodge. Adna makes sure the lady gets a proper and a complete information about Mr Lal and his family members stay there and Adna also makes sure the lady is not embarrassed by giving her details of Mr Lal's departure showcasing a very normal reaction which might make her feel that Adna does not know anything about their affair and that the visitor might be a relative of Mr Lal.

" Oh , I see,' she said and gave me a surprisingly genuine smile. ' He must have left ina hurry, I was supposed to meet him today. Never mind , I'll call him."

P-109, L-22-24

Adna's tactics in handling this lady was a successful one. The lady didnot feel that Adna knew about her at all. She gave Adna a genuine smile which tells that she was quite comfortable. The lady also further told Adna that she was supposed to meet him today . She seemed ok and asserted that she would give him a call herself. With the coming of the woman to the lodge , looking for Mr Lal provesthat Sunita was right, whatever she told Adna seemed correct at that point of time. And the lady so confidently told Adna that she would give Mr Lal a call again proved that both of them were in touch.

In Stupid Cupid, Mamang Dai, creates a world where there are serious and complex relationships who are already married but in some kind of extra- marital affair. Her women like Mareb and Adna are the leading characters in the novel but both of them have a kind of complex relationships in their married and love life. The reader's are very much aware of the kind of deception they were doing with their partner's but still their deception creates a kind

of interest vested on them may be because the readers too wants to know the end to such duality of life they were into.

As for Adna, she was not married but was in a relationship with a already married man who had a settled happy family in Canada and when he was in Delhi he would be with Adna like a husband doing everything for her . She knew of the situation very well and tried to create a gap in their relationship but everytime she did she found herself back to him. She found that though they shared an immoral relationship which she wanted to do away with but it was impossible for her to ignore her senses. Both seemed to adjust into both their lifestyle where her friend carries on with his role of a husband towards his wife and family deceiving them and living a dual life with Adna.

Mareb on the other hand, is happily married to Dayud and has a daughter whom she wants to do her schooling in Delhi. Her romance with Rohit had started during her college days but it was she who fell in love with Dayud on her trip to her hometown to say bye to her father . At that time when Mareb and Dayud met he was already married but both fell for each other under immense pressure. And what is seen later is that Mareb does not leave Dayud but her thoughts were looking for Rohit . She shuttles herself between Dayud by still being in their marriage and meeting Rohit whenever she could when she was in Delhi , she lived a dual life deceiving Dayud in their marriage. She seems to lack in her emotional maturity because of which she married Dayud when she was still in a love relationship with Rohit. And now , when she was married and a mother , she wished to be with Rohit not realising what she was actually doing in her marriage. She could not walk out from her marriage with Dayud because there wasn't actually any problem with their relationship nor could she do away with Rohit. All she wanted was her personal happiness and contentment ignoring all ties and did what made her feel good. But, Dayud displays himself as a mature man who sensed something was not right but was not aware of his wife Mareb 's deceit on their marriage but he tried to get back his wife back into their normal life. He shows how a loving and concerned husband could take care of his wife and protect his family showing patience and resilience.

Amine and Rizvi , a perfect couple complimenting each other in their marriage. She is a woman who represents ladies who crave to have a happy family with kids and proper amenities which she could call a home. She preferred to stay home , take care of the house , the family members , cook and be a dutiful loving wife to her husband. And Rizvi, he too

portrays a perfect husband giving all the happiness to Amine, marital bliss in their marriage. But, things get shattered with the untimely murder of Amine by some miscreants bring a huge halt into their happy married life.

Sheila, a maid to Adna in her ' Four Seasons ', was happy and experienced a conjugal marriage with her husband and blessed with a daughter. They were poor but happy and true to each other in their relationship inspite of having monetary shortage. But, she had a plan to come out of it by doing small job ,a maid and try to contribute in helping her husband to tackle the domestic expenses.

Sunita Lal , a woman married to engineer, R. K Lal suffers complexity in their marriage due to her husband 's infidelity but she prefers not to give up easily on her marriage because of her twelve years old son who needs financial assistance and the presence of a father in his life . And in her society a young woman divorcing would bring huge shame on her parents specially her mother who might die hearing of a crumbling marriage.

We find another cute but powerful woman Jia, who is shown to have experienced marital life but only for a brief period of time. The kind of marriage she underwent was an abusive, a bitter one where she had a baby who died at childbirth itself. She was in a marital relationship with a man who was not at all responsible for anything in their marriage and on top of that he was abusive. Jia, shows clarity with what she does not want and what she wants in her life by divorcing her unworthy husband and walks out of such a meaningless marriage and decides to pursue her career as a journalist. She chooses a bright future for herself walking away from a dark and unsuccessful marriage .

Thus, we see how Mamang Dai creates stories in her novel, Stupid Cupid with multiple couples who are in love , who are married and are entangled in the complexities of their relationships finding it hard to walk away from their marriage but still want their old love like Mareb , and character like Adna who wants to do away with her already married friend knowing that it was immoral but fid herself drifting back to him , there are character's like Sheila and her husband who try to face the hardships in their marital life together but are happy together, Amine and her husband Rizvi too display the picture of a perfect couple , character like Mrs Lal try to save her marriage fearing her dependence on her husband for her son's upbringing and the fear of what society might react if she takes a divorce and also considering her parents reaction to it. She was very much aware of her husbands infidelity, and character like Jia, a strong modern woman who decide to walk out of an abusive

marriage and seek a better career and a better life. Mamang Dai creates character's in who are in love and in a marriage so close and relatable to the kind of real life stories as it is rightly said that literature reflects society and so at times of confusion such stories might be able to help in taking the right decision serving the greater society.

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