

The Picture on the Wall:

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The picture on the wall showed the happy faces of four people; me, my wife and our two children. As I looked at it, grief overcame me. Those days were the happiest in my life. I was a bank manager those days; a pretty wife, two smart children, a good house in an affluent neighborhood. Well what more can one ask for? I did not have anything to complain about. Life was indeed good, and now...

It was on this very cursed day, six years back I lost my family. It was Laxmi's sister's birthday, and we were going to her place by car. Aakash as usual, was sitting in the front with me. It was about 3:00 PM.

I heard some shouting from behind, and soon a white Jeep was riding to our right. It looked like some college kids were having one hell of a time, screaming and dancing. They seemed drunk to me.

"Damn this young generation" I exclaimed. Laxmi remained silent.

They soon started shouting abuses at us, and raced past us. I cursed them mentally. It was Shyam, my youngest son who urged me to overtake them. A close race followed.

"Mohan, please. Let them go their way", Laxmi as usual was not being very sportive.

I pushed on the gas pedal and overtook them. Aakash and Shyam shouted with joy. But they soon overtook us again honking loudly. I lost my nerve and tried to go past them. It was a curve and I did not see the damn truck until the last moment and ...

I was startled by the noises coming from the hall. I was so deeply immersed in thoughts. I saw Laxmi, Aakash and Shyam coming from the hall. They went past me. Laxmi has not changed much. But Aakash and Shyam have grown up. Aakash was even sporting some facial hair. I saw tears in Laxmi's eyes as she removed the old garland around my picture on the wall and put a new garland around it.

The End